DELUSIONS OF LIBERTY:

RETHINKING DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN AMERICAN GRAND
STRATEGY

BY

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ABSTRACT

As the champion of the current liberal world order, the United States has institutionalized democracy promotion as a central theme of its foreign policy. The chaotic aftermaths of the Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya campaigns, however, demonstrate that the unqualified promotion of democracy via military force can work counter to American political and security interests. Furthermore, in a unipolar world, the character of the hegemon and its subsequent actions portend unprecedented implications to the international order. As such, America's storied history of global expansionism, combined with its post-Cold War military actions in the name of democracy, contributes to a widening metaperception gap between Washington and the world.

This work examines the implications of America's preference for democracy promotion abroad on Washington's grand strategy within the historical context of the post-Cold War era. Additionally, it explores the challenges of reconciling American national interests and regional stability vis-à-vis the unconditional promotion of democratic governance. It employs the theory of foreign imposed regime change as the primary analytical criterion by which to evaluate the implications of America's preference for democracy promotion. Two empirical case studies determine quantitative and qualitative outcomes: 1) The U.S./NATO military intervention in Libya and 2) U.S. handling of the Syrian Civil War. The case studies demonstrate that American support of democratic movements in both Libya and Syria has upset the regional balance-of-power and yielded unfavorable conditions for American security interests. They also conclude that successful democratization after a foreign imposed regime change via military force depends upon the strategy applied by the intervener and the favorability of domestic conditions within the target state. If the United States intends to promote democracy abroad via military means, American policymakers must consider both the political and economic costs of institution building in the target state as well as the favorability of pre-existing domestic conditions to eventual democratization.

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Introduction

Ὡς τυραννίδα γὰρ ἤδη ἔχετε αὐτήν, ἣνλαβεῖν μὲν ἄδικον δοκεῖ εἶναι, ἀφεῖναι δὲ ἐπικίνδυνον. – [Your empire] is now like a tyranny, it may have been wrong to take it; it is certainly dangerous to let it go.

–Pericles, describing the Athenian Empire,
in Thucydides'
The Peloponnesian War,
Book 2, Chapter 63

If there be one principle more deeply written than any other in the mind of every American, it is that we should have nothing to do with conquest.

- Thomas Jefferson,
from a letter to William Short, 1791

The best democracy program ever invented is the U.S. Army.

- Dr. Michael Leeden,
American Enterprise Institute, 2003

The termination of the Cold War seemingly ended the twentieth century's ultimate great-power rivalry and heralded the primacy of the American-led, liberal institutionalist order. Francis Fukuyama, in his now famous 1989 commentary, *The End of History,* declared, "large-scale conflict must involve large states still caught in the grip of history, and they appear to be passing from the scene."[1] While Fukuyama's prognostication largely holds true (since 1989, no large-scale conflicts have occurred among the great powers), the United States *has* engaged doggedly in numerous smaller-scale conflicts from 1989 to the present day. In the post-Cold War era, Washington's rationale for expending its blood and treasure abroad frequently finds expression in values such as human rights; freedom of the global commons; and, more enigmatically, the promotion of democracy.

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[1] Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest,* (Summer 1989).

As the champion of the current liberal world order, the United States has institutionalized democracy promotion as a central theme of its foreign policy. "Defending democracy," states President Obama's 2015 National Security Strategy, "is related to *every enduring national interest.*"[2] Taken at face value, such a noble, morally grounded approach is difficult to disparage. Furthermore, America's visible, external commitment to democracy theoretically reinforces both its soft power and its prestige. Indeed, the success of democracy promotion efforts in post-1945 Germany and Japan implies that such policies can yield favorable results. The recent US military interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, however—conducted partially in the name of democracy promotion—have yielded questionable outcomes. Instability reigns supreme in these countries in spite of the US military's efforts. Their beleaguered populaces have yet to enjoy the fruits of democratic governance. Further, as a hegemonic power, America's promotion of democracy abroad through the use of force evokes perceptions of unchecked expansionism to many audiences. Such dissonance characterizes the enduring debate in American foreign policy between idealism, manifested in democracy promotion, and realism. As former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger aptly asserts, "America struggles to define the relationship between its power and its principles."[3]

This work examines the implications of America's preference for democracy promotion abroad on Washington's grand strategy within the historical context of the post-Cold War era. Additionally, it explores the challenges of reconciling national interests and regional stability vis-à-vis the unconditional promotion of democratic governance. In addressing these issues, several central questions logically emerge—first, are there scenarios in which cooperating with autocratic regimes serve American

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[2] The White House, (2015), *National Security Strategy*, retrieved 10 January 2016 from: https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf

[3] Henry Kissinger, *World Order,* (New York: Penguin Press), 2014, 8.

interests more favorably than supporting democratic movements by default? Second, have Washington's post-Cold War democracy promotion efforts in the Middle East resulted in advantageous political outcomes for the United States? Third, and most important, should the United States maintain its strategy of democracy promotion abroad as the central tenet of its foreign policy or should it entertain interest-based exceptions thereto? By confronting these topics, this thesis endeavors to determine both the legitimate national interests and subsequent political hazards generated by liberal democratic internationalism in a way that informs future considerations regarding the strategic application of American power.

While the primary case studies presented herein reflect the post-Cold War era, the thesis also examines historical antecedents in order to frame the broader policy debate contextually. This debate is decidedly *not* a new phenomenon. Well before America's ascent to the status of global hegemon, visions of spreading democracy and liberty anchored the ideological foundations of the nascent republic. John Adams articulated such impassioned ambitions as early as 1765, stating, "I always consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scheme and design by Providence for the illumination and emancipation of mankind all over the Earth."[4] That the United States indeed *prefers* democracy promotion is well established. Yet the extent to which the United States *should* employ its hard power to promote democracy abroad lacks consensus. The resulting political discord reflects accurately—even to the present day—the complicated, perhaps even contradictory, realities associated with an expansionist, liberal, values-based democracy on the part of the world's strongest economic and military power.

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[4] John Adams, *Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law,* 1765.

Research Methodology and Chapter Outline

Evaluating the policy outcome(s) of America's democracy promotion efforts abroad eclipses a universal standard or measure. The existing scholarship on this subject spans a broad spectrum of topical depth, ranging from innocuous policy papers to widely accepted international relations theory. Moreover, the political substance of democracy *itself*, its contested status as either a "dichotomous or continuous phenomenon," lacks universal consensus in scholarly circles.[5] Admittedly, a plethora of economic, diplomatic, social, structural, military, political, technological, and other factors influence "successful" foreign policy outcomes. Examining the roles and effects of each is far beyond the scope of this work, which is to determine the implications of American *political and military* actions taken in the name of democracy promotion.

Since the conclusion of the Cold War, the United States and its allies have undertaken eight military interventions—at least in part to promote democracy—in Panama (1989), Haiti (1994), Bosnia (1995), Kosovo (1999), Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003), and Libya (2011).[6] Additionally, the trajectory of the Syrian Civil War (2011-present) and subsequent great power involvement depends profoundly on American and Western notions of democracy promotion.

Alexander Downes and Jonathan Monten's theory of foreign-imposed regime change (FIRC) and democratization presents a model of the conditions under which foreign-imposed regime change results in

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[5] For more on political science debates about the structural concepts surrounding democracy, see: David Collier and Robert Adcock, "Democracy and Dichotomies: A Pragmatic Approach to Choices about Concepts," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 2 (June 1999), pp. 537–565; and Gerardo L. Munck and Jay Verkuilen, "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (February 2002), pp. 5–34.

[6] Alexander Downes and Jonathan Monten, "Forced to be Free: Why Foreign Imposed Regime Change Rarely Leads to Democratization," *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Spring 2013), pp. 90–131.

successful or failed democratization.[7] FIRC theory rests upon two primary variables in examining democratization outcomes after an intervention: "1) the interveners' policy choices; and 2) the predisposition of local conditions to democratic change."[8] Downes and Monten underscore the following central propositions to their theory:

> Successful democratization following FIRC depends on both the strategy adopted by the intervener and whether domestic conditions in the target state are favorable to democracy. When intervening democracies target individual leaders for removal but leave the underlying political institutions of a regime intact, democratization is unlikely to occur, even if conditions favorable to democracy are present. Interventions that implement concrete, pro-democratic institutional reforms, such as sponsoring elections, can succeed when conditions in the target state are favorable to democracy. When domestic *preconditions* [emphasis added] for democracy are lacking, however, the democratizing efforts of the intervener are largely for naught: states that are economically underdeveloped, ethnically heterogeneous, or lack prior experience with representative government face serious obstacles to democratization, and even outsiders with good intentions are typically unable to surmount these barriers no matter how hard they try.[9]

This work employs the theory of foreign-imposed regime change as the primary analytical criterion by which to evaluate the implications of America's preference for democracy promotion. It uses two empirical case studies to calculate quantitative and qualitative outcomes: 1) *The U.S./NATO military intervention in Libya* and 2) *U.S. handling of the Syrian Civil War*. As may be expected, the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns dominate much of the scholarship concerning democracy promotion efforts in the post-Cold War era. Conversely, a relative dearth

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[7] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 103.
[8] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 103.
[9] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 103.

of analytical studies regarding similar efforts in Libya and Syria presents an opportunity to glean valuable policy conclusions via in-depth assessment.

Furthermore, following the age-old adage that "context matters," these two case studies comprise equivalent units of analytical comparison. Both cases encompass democracy promotion efforts within autocratic regimes located in the Middle East (where America has *already* experimented with democracy promotion within a formerly autocratic state—Iraq). The autocratic disposition of the former Qaddafi regime in Libya and the current Assad regime in Syria is structurally similar. Additionally, in both cases the United States and its allies advocated the removal of an autocrat in favor of supporting domestic insurgencies that promised a redistribution of power and, ostensibly, "democratic" tendencies. In military terms, the United States and its allies looked primarily to airpower to decapitate or paralyze regime leadership and avoid the commitment of ground forces.

American strategy in Libya and deliberations regarding Syria emphasize what Robert Pape calls "political decapitation" from the air. Pape defines this approach as "using airpower to create the circumstances in which local groups overthrow the government, either by popular revolt or coup, replacing it with one more amenable to concessions."[10] Washington's reliance on political decapitation via airpower in Libya and as being employed in Syria is of particular importance, as the means of generating military effects can often fail to satisfy American political objectives. According to Pape, "the main attraction of targeting political leadership with conventional weapons [i.e. airpower] is that it offers the possibility of successful coercion with minimal commitment of resources and risk of life."[11] As will be demonstrated, the lure of politically seductive military options such as

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[10] Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 1996, 82.
[11] Pape, *Bombing to Win,* 80.

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airpower as a sole instrument of force emboldens American political leaders' willingness to exercise hard power in the name of democracy promotion.

Because the Libya campaign has been completed, the ensuing transition period carries important implications—a 2015 RAND Corporation study declares, "the intervention in Libya could be a harbinger of future conflicts."[12] Therefore, analyzing both the Libyan campaign and its policy outcomes greatly informs this work's subsequent conclusions for U.S. policy vis-à-vis the Syrian Civil War. Here again, the similarity of the selected cases facilitates the application of major deductions to inform future thinking regarding democracy promotion and American interests.

Intelligence Sharing: Complementary Evaluative Criterion

In addition to FIRC theory, the thesis introduces one further evaluative criterion in order to assess more comprehensively the effects of democracy promotion strategy on American interests: *U.S. intelligence-sharing relationships with the target state.* Intelligence sharing represents a singular and unique variable, as the United States does not select its intelligence partners based on the democratic virtues of their government(s). In fact, cooperating with countries that share diametrically opposing values and political ideologies is an enduring US historical reality. For example, during World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt unequivocally compared his archetypal alliance of convenience with Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union to a pact with "the devil."[13]

America's post-Cold War experiences with radical Islamic extremism demand delicate political and military approaches to autocratic Middle Eastern states such as Libya and Syria. As such, when considering the relative value of intelligence-sharing relationships with

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[12] Karl P. Mueller, *Precision and Purpose: Airpower in the Libyan Civil War,* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation), 2015, 7.

[13] Evan V. Resnick, "Strange Bedfellows: U.S. Bargaining Behavior with Allies of Convenience," *International Security*, vol. 35, no. 3 (Winter 2010/2011), 144-184.

the aforementioned countries, this work asks if maintaining an intelligence-sharing relationship with an autocratic target state outweighs supporting democratic movements therein. Answering this question contributes partly to determining, in cost-benefit terms, the efficacy of maintaining democracy promotion as a centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy.

Democracy Promotion and Allies of Convenience

As depicted below in Figure 1, Evan Resnick defines the term "allies of convenience" to indicate the "initiation of security cooperation between two states that are ideological and geopolitical adversaries, in an effort to balance the growing threat posed by a third state (or coalition or non-state actor) that each of the partners views as a greater immediate danger to its security than is posed by the other partner."[14] For the purposes of this work, pre-2011 Libya and Syria are considered "allies of convenience," as they represented traditional adversaries that forged new ties with the United States via their intelligence services to balance the growing threat posed by radical Islamic extremism.

Figure 1: Typology of Alliances

Source: Evan V. Resnick, in "Strange Bedfellows: U.S. Bargaining Behavior with Allies of Convenience," *International Security*, vol. 35, no. 3 (Winter 2010/2011): 144-184.

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[14] Evan V. Resnick, "Strange Bedfellows: U.S. Bargaining Behavior with Allies of Convenience," *International Security*, vol. 35, no. 3 (Winter 2010/2011): 144-184.

Each of the partners viewed radical Islamic extremism as a greater danger to its security than posed by cooperation with the United States (Chapter 4 qualifies and substantiates these assumptions in-depth).

A Strategic Point of Departure: Politics and Military Force

The nexus of politics and military action must command prominence in any evaluative effort to examine the United States' policy of democracy promotion. G. John Ikenberry asserts, "When powerful states rise up to shape the rules . . . of the global system, they face choices."[15] Indeed, the decision to employ military power abroad indubitably epitomizes the most critical choice states must make. Policymakers must recognize, however, as British military strategist J.F.C. Fuller wisely opines, that "military success can only procure the desired conditions of policy or stave off the undesired ones . . . it is only a *means,* and not as an end, that it is of value."[16]

The Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz's maxim that war is a "true political instrument, carried on by other means," provides a foundational point of departure for the strategist.[17] As military operations cannot be divorced from political realities, both political *and* military leaders must possess a clear vision of what they intend to achieve in war. According to Clausewitz, this must be the "first of all strategic questions."[18] He further elaborates, "the statesman and commander must establish...the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature." [19] Frederick Kagan offers a similar assessment, "War is not about killing people and blowing things up, it is

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[15] G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: the Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 116.
[16] John Frederick Charles Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War,* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1926), 76.
[17] Carl von Clausewitz, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, *On War,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976/1984), 25.
[18] Clausewitz, *On War.* Book I, Chapter 1, 88.
[19] Clausewitz, *On War.* Book I, Chapter 1, 88.

purposeful violence to achieve a political goal."[20] Therefore, political objectives ultimately comprise the nucleus of any subsequent military operation and form the standard by which it should be evaluated. This foundational assumption comprises the benchmark by which America's post-Cold War foreign policy experiments with democracy promotion can be assessed.

Roadmap of the Argument

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the theoretical arguments underpinning the debate on America's role in the world as well as the various lenses through which America sees itself. It examines classic international relations theories such as realism and liberalism in order to frame the ideological baseline associated with various policy positions.

Chapter 2 addresses tensions between idealism and realism as the foundational premise of friction within U.S. foreign policy circles on democracy promotion. It also presents a chronology of American expansionism and interprets this phenomenon as an outgrowth of liberal ideologies.

Chapter 3 investigates the dynamics of unipolarity on the international system, the current status of the global world order, and subsequent implications for American democracy promotion efforts within this structural framework. Additionally, it examines the role and influence of the democratic peace theory in post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy and the wide-ranging political factions that embrace its core assumptions.

Chapter 4 presents the first case study of U.S. democracy promotion efforts in the post-Cold War era: *the 2011 U.S./NATO intervention in Libya.*

Chapter 5 presents the second case study, *America's handling of the Syrian Civil War to the present.*

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[20] Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target, the Transformation of American Military Policy,* (New York: Encounter Books, 2006), 358-59.

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Chapter 6 delivers a comprehensive analysis based on the evaluative criteria and presents both conclusions and recommendations for policymakers.

Chapter 1

Foundational Concepts of International Relations:
Realism, Liberalism, and Democracy Promotion

> Political science is the science not only of what is, but what ought to be.
>
> *– E.H. Carr, The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1939*

> Die Politik ist die Lehre vom Möglichen. – Politics is the art of the possible.
>
> *– Otto von Bismarck, in an interview with Friedrich Meyer von Waldeck, St. Petersburgische Zeitung, 11 August 1867*

Democracy itself personifies a singular historical and political change in the history of human affairs. The period between 508 and 322 B.C., known as the "classical period" of ancient Athens, saw the emergence of the δῆμος (dēmos), or the body of ordinary adult males, as a bona fide political authority.[1] According to Josiah Ober, the Athenian Revolution facilitated the advent of δημοκρατία (dēmokratia), or democracy, featuring a "radical and decisive shift in the structures of political authority and of social relations; [...] the replacement of a relatively small ruling elite as the motor that drove history by a relatively broad citizenship of ordinary (non-elite) men."[2]

The ancient Athenians probably did not fathom that their democratic experiment would shape subsequent centuries of both human and political development on a global scale. In a twist of historical irony, the Greek Revolution against the Ottoman Empire (1821-1829) fueled the United States' first debates surrounding intervention in support of democratic uprisings. Edward Mead Earle describes American sentiment in 1821: "All educated men in America had sat in reverence at the feet of the ancient Greeks. They saw in the inhabitants of the Peloponnesus and the Aegean islands in 1821 not a

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[1] Josiah Ober, *The Athenian Revolution, Essays on Ancient Greek Democracy and Political Theory*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 4.

[2] Ober, *The Athenian Revolution*, 4.

simple, well-intentioned, illiterate body of peasantry and seaman and brigands, but the lineal descendants of the ancient Hellenes, heirs to the traditions of Pericles, Plato, Demosthenes, and Homer."[3] President James Monroe, father of the eponymous foreign policy doctrine, further stated, "the reappearance of those people [the Greeks] in their original character, contending in favor to their liberties, should produce that excitement and sympathy in their favor which have been so signally displayed throughout the United States."[4] While the United States did not provide military support during the Greek Revolution, the movement both stirred American emotions and revealed political tendencies that would eventually dominate American foreign policy.

As noted earlier, America's preference for democracy promotion is well established. Policies, however, are ultimately conceived within the realm of ideas and theory. Prior to investigating the particulars surrounding Washington's modern democracy promotion debate, it is essential to discuss the theoretical foundations thereof. In doing so, one naturally arrives at the fundamental questions: what is international relations theory and how does it (or should it) affect American foreign policy?

International Relations Theory and American Foreign Policy

The study of statecraft, or the relationships between states, is classified academically as the discipline of international relations. While the study of modern international relations represents a comparatively new discipline, it is grounded conceptually in the earliest recorded history of mankind.[5] Particularly in the social sciences, theories regarding human or state behavior are not unconditional or absolute in

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[3] Edward Mead Earle, "American Interest in the Greek Cause, 1821-1827," *The American Historical Review,* Vol. 33, No. 1 (October, 1927), 44-63.

[4] Annual message of President James Monroe, December 3, 1822, *in* James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, (New York: Bureau of National Literature, Inc., 1897), Volume II, 193.

[5] Michael Cox, with R. Campanaro, *Introduction to International Relations Subject Guide* (London: London School of Economics, 2012), 17.

their conclusions, but rather represent rough probabilities. J.C. Wylie, a noted strategic theorist, states, "a theory is simply an idea designed to account for actuality or to account for what the theorist thinks will come to pass as actuality. It is orderly rationalization of real or presumed patterns of events."[6] Perhaps most important, a theory, per acclaimed political scientist Kenneth Waltz, possesses both "explanatory and predictive power."[7] Furthermore, "rather than being mere collections of laws," Waltz articulates, "theories are statements that *explain* them [emphasis added]."[8] Proclaiming the unique qualification of international relations as an autonomous concept, Waltz posits, "International politics is a domain distinct from the economic, social, and other international domains that one may conceive of."[9]

Consequently, policymakers often draw upon theoretically derived conceptions to validate political initiatives. Arnold Kaufman offers a particularly prescient synopsis of the relationship between theory and policy. "Political theory," opines Kaufman, "should be a guide to action. The political philosopher should provide those who make policy with principles with which will aid them in the attempt to cope with specific socio-political problems."[10] Further, according to Kaufman, the underpinning of theory with an ultimate, overarching ideal (such as "democracy" or "liberty") is indispensable to policymakers, because "political theorizing is sterile wordplay unless there is some way of arousing and re-arousing adherents."[11]

Nonetheless, the value of international relations theory is not universally accepted among all policymakers. For example, Paul Nitze,

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[6] Joseph Caldwell Wylie, *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power and Control,* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1967), 31.
[7] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics,* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1979) 69.
[8] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 5.
[9] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 69.
[10] Arnold S. Kaufman, "The Nature and Function of Political Theory," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 51, No. 1, (January 7, 1954), 5-22.
[11] Kaufman, "The Nature and Function of Political Theory," 6.

an influential American foreign policy official during the Cold War, asserted, "Most of what has been written and taught under the heading of 'political science' by Americans since World War II has been [...] of limited value, if not counterproductive, as a guide to the actual conduct of policy."[12] Despite such accusations, in a realm as unpredictable and nebulous as international politics, theory is a very important tool with which to frame contextually one's surroundings.

Theory best delivers explanatory utility when accompanied by the insightful study of history. This is especially efficacious in constructing a contextual baseline surrounding modern political and security challenges. Tony Smith, an influential voice on democracy promotion, opines, "the study of American foreign policy must be accompanied by more careful attention to the logic of world history, especially to the structure of political development in foreign countries and in the international system. It is with these forces that American policy necessarily interacts, and a sense of the reciprocal character of the exchanges (for America, too, is a product of global developments) provides a necessary perspective from which to see the pattern in events."[13]

This section introduces realism and liberalism, the two principal schools of international relations thought that dominate American foreign policy. Identifying each theory's central propositions elucidates the philosophical underpinnings of the primary arguments both for and against external democracy promotion vis-à-vis American grand strategy. Subsequent discussions of democracy promotion policies find expression in the language of realism and liberalism.

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[12] Quoted in Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict,* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 2.

[13] Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 32.

International Relations Theory I: Realism

Realist international relations theory originates philosophically in the works of Thucydides, Niccolo Machiavelli, and Thomas Hobbes.[14] "Realists are pessimists when it comes to international politics," declares John Mearsheimer, perhaps the most influential realist in today's scholarly debates.[15] Mearsheimer continues: "Realists agree that creating a peaceful world would be desirable, but they see no easy way to escape the harsh world of security competition and war."[16] This worldview is profoundly shaped by the original writings of Thucydides, an Athenian general and historian who wrote the *History of the Peloponnesian War.* Thucydides highlights that moral standards connecting parties beyond their borders yield minimal consistent outcomes.[17]

Moreover, relations between states exist within a condition of perpetual uncertainty—war is always possible.[18] In realist theory, states are both the primary actors and ultimate arbiters; however, the great powers are unequivocally the most important players within the international system. Despite popular misconceptions, realism does account for the actions, talent, and influence of individuals on states as

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[14] Note: The aforementioned realist philosophers do not represent a comprehensive compilation of all foundational realist thought. However, their contributions have most profoundly influenced the subsequent development of realist theory leading up to modern times. Much more can certainly be discussed regarding the origins and development of realist philosophy; however, the purpose of this section is solely to provide a broad overview of basic concepts in international relations. For more on realist international relations theory, see Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace,* (New York: Norton Publishers, 1997), John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* (New York: Norton Publishers, 2001), Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948 and subsequent editions), Hans Morgenthau, *Scientific Man versus Power Politics,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939,* (Wiltshire, UK: Antony Rowe, Ltd., 2001, originally published 1939).
[15] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* (New York: Norton Publishers, 2001), 17.
[16] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* 17.
[17] Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace,* (New York: Norton Publishers, 1997), 51.
[18] Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace, 51.*

well. Italian philosopher Niccolo Macchiavelli (1469-1527) emphasizes the "individual leader, citizen, subject, and his ambitions, fears, and interests."[19] Macchiavelli's best-known work, *The Prince,* highlights the attributes necessary to practice effective statecraft, concluding that a successful prince must be both a "lion" and a "fox."[20] Michael Doyle assesses Macchiavelli's greatest contribution to realist philosophy as his ability to "tell how individual entrepreneurship makes states as well as how states expand and why they fall."[21]

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), the foremost realist philosopher with respect to the contemporary state, identified the *anarchic* nature of the international system as its defining characteristic. In *Leviathan,* Hobbes analyzes the effects of anarchy among sovereign states, determining that competition between states under anarchic conditions results in an enduring state of war.[22] Framing the essence of Hobbes' argument, Michael Doyle reveals Hobbes' two key foundations regarding structural realism: "1) He [Hobbes] explained why states should and could be treated as rational unitary actors, despite all their actual diversity. 2) He explained why international anarchy could and should be considered a state of war, despite all the actual variety of state motives and relations…achieving both of these by drawing in considerations of human nature and the nature of the state."[23]

In a contemporary context, Kenneth Waltz's influential treatise, *Man, the State, and War,* seeks to explain the causes of war through the lenses of three categories, or "images"—individuals, states, and the international system.[24] Waltz concludes that while individuals and

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[19] Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace,* 93.
[20] Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace,* 98.
[21] Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace,* 95.
[22] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan,* ed. Michael Oakeshott (London: Collier Publishing, 1962), 100.
[23] Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace, 112.*
[24] Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

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states are important actors, the anarchic nature of the international system is primarily responsible for war. Anarchy, in Waltz's context, does not refer to a lack of order or imply the primacy of unrestrained chaos. Rather, anarchy denotes the fundamental absence of a sovereign authority among the states that comprise the international system. As such, "each state," according to Waltz, "pursues its own interests, however defined, in ways it judges best."[25]

The implications of realist assertions force states to focus on their own security, elevating this task to the *raison d'etre* of the state itself.[26] In such a framework, each sovereign state views the increased military standing of opposing states as a threat to its own security, resulting in a "security dilemma."[27] Robert Jervis highlights this "spiral model," in which states find protection "only through their own strength," pursuing conflict if they feel threatened by the actions of other states.[28] Therefore, peer competitors find themselves in a perpetual cycle of uncertainty, raising the prospects that even minor miscalculations may result in wider conflict.

Security dilemmas, however, are emphatically not a 21st century phenomenon. Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War highlights the security dilemma between the two leading Greek city-states, Athens and Sparta. Thucydides' observations are of particular importance to any subsequent analysis of warfare because they demonstrate that anarchy, miscalculation, misperception, and alliance dynamics are enduring phenomena. In Ancient Greece, the status quo depended on a strategic parity between Athens, Sparta, and their associated allies. Thucydides postulates that the conflict's origin stemmed from a perceived power shift

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[25] Waltz, *Man, the State, and War,* 238.

[26] Kenneth Waltz, *The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory,* The Journal of Interdisciplinary History, Vol. 18, No. 4, The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars (Spring, 1988), pp. 615-628.

[27] Robert Jervis, *Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Politics,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 64.

[28] Jervis, *Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Politics,* 64.

within the Hellenic order. Thucydides writes, "the growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Sparta, made war inevitable."[29] Athens' accumulation of power created a sense of insecurity among Sparta and its allies, fueling the perception that war was necessary to prevent Athenian hegemony.

Although separated by over two thousand years, a key parallel exists between the Peloponnesian War and modern conflicts. The great powers fought World War I, World War II, and the Cold War largely to resolve perceived imbalances of power between competitor states. It is precisely this pursuit of power that John Mearsheimer classifies as the principal goal of great powers. Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism argues, "the international system creates powerful incentives for states to look for opportunities to gain power at the expense of rivals, and to take advantage of those situations when the benefits outweigh the costs."[30] By this logic, one cannot separate the use of force, or threat of use of force, from international relations, as "a state's ultimate goal is to be the hegemon in the system."[31]

Liberal democracies such as the United States tend to eschew realism's cold, calculated approach. Irrespective of its efficacy as an explanatory instrument, realism remains a markedly unpopular school in the West.[32] As Mearsheimer notes, "realism's central message—that it makes good sense for states to selfishly pursue power—does not have broad appeal. It is difficult to imagine a modern political leader openly asking the public to fight and die to improve the balance of power."[33] This is a particularly salient point—as a global hegemon based on democratic principles, America's foreign policy hangs within a delicate

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[29] Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War, The Landmark Thucydides.* (New York: Free Press, 1998), 16.
[30] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* (New York: Norton Publishers, 2001), 21.
[31] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* 21.
[32] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 22.
[33] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 22.

balance between power and ideals. How and when to exercise such power are questions that fuel foreign policy debates about democracy promotion.

International Relations Theory II: Liberalism

Liberal international relations theory traces its roots principally to the 18th century epoch known as the Enlightenment. This era was characterized by intellectual and philosophical emphasis on reason as a means to improve humankind's condition.[34] Thus, central to liberalism's philosophical outlook is the importance of individual liberty. Isaiah Berlin articulates that liberals' fundamental concern surrounds "how individuals can maintain a certain minimum area of personal freedom which on no account must be violated."[35]

In contrast to the realists' pessimism about international politics, liberalism views the international system as a mechanism through which to make the world a better place. According to Michael Joseph Smith, "the authority of the liberal tradition as a whole derives from its faith in reason and in the application of rationally derived principles to human institutions. Liberals believe that disputes can and should be resolved by recourse to rational argument."[36] Realists and liberals do share similar views regarding the status of states as the principal actors in international politics. Liberals part ways with realists, however, in terms of the internal characteristics of states. Whereas realists postulate that domestic dynamics matter little in international politics, liberals argue that the internal characteristics of states are not uniform and that these differentiations greatly influence state behavior.[37]

Philosophers such as John Locke (1632-1704) and Jeremy

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[34] F. Parkinson, *The Philosophy of International Relations: A Study in the History of Thought* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1977), chap. 4.

[35] Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 124.

[36] Michael Joseph Smith, *Liberalism and International Reform,* in Terry Nardin and David R. Mapel, *Traditions of International Ethics,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 202.

[37] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* 15.

Bentham (1748-1832) articulate many of modern liberalism's foundational principles. Locke asserts that the primary role of the state is to uphold the life, liberty, and property of its subjects—it is Locke who first formulated the notion of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" subsequently adopted by the founders of the American Revolution.[38] Michael Doyle credits Locke with "establishing the epistemological foundation on which the Enlightenment was erected."[39] Additionally, Locke asserts that individuals have a "natural right" to defend the ideals of life, liberty, and property and to punish those who tread upon the rights of others.[40] Thomas Jefferson's rationale of popular revolt against King George III's rule, citing "a long train of abuses, evincing a design," follows Locke's methodology for justified rebellion articulated in his seminal writing, *Two Treatises on Government* (1690).[41]

Jeremy Bentham views human nature through the lens of utility, underscoring the implications of both domestic and international institutional variations. In doing so, Bentham delivers an intellectual coda to Locke, "formulating an early theory of international organization and collective security as supplements to the legalism Locke justifies."[42] Bentham issues a prescient cautionary note regarding phenomena now classified as the "security dilemma" and "pre-emptive war." Bentham writes, "Measures of self-defense are naturally taken for projects of aggression. The same causes produce on both sides the same effects; each makes haste to begin for fear of being forestalled. In this state of things, if on either side there happen to be a Minister, or a would-be

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[38] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* ed. George Routledge and Sons Limited, (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1910), 185.
[39] Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace,* 217.
[40] Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace,* 217.
[41] John Locke, *Two Treatises on Government,* ed. Peter Laslett (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1690/1988), para. 19, in Michael Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace,* 215.
[42] Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace,* 219.

Minister, who has a fancy for war, the stroke is struck, and the tinder catches fire."[43]

Bentham's proposed remedy to the aforementioned dilemmas constitutes the beginnings of international organization and collective security arrangements. He advocates for the formation of a "Common Court of Judicature," charged with ensuring "the necessity for war no longer follows from difference of opinion over rights claimed and duties owed."[44] Michael Doyle further develops Bentham's view of democracy, delivering a key contextual foundation to today's democracy promotion debate—"The biggest problem [of democratic governance] arises from the inability of representation to have the needed deterrent effect on governmental intrigue. When caught, ministers plead to the public: 'It was your interest I was pursuing.' Without a well-informed public, their plea will too often work."[45]

Armed with Locke and Bentham's propositions, liberals clash with realists in terms of the typology of individual states. According to Mearsheimer, democracy from a liberal viewpoint "is an inherently preferable arrangement to alternatives" such as an autocratic dictatorship.[46] Therefore, declares Mearsheimer, liberals view the world in terms of "good and bad states—good states pursue cooperative policies and hardly ever start wars on their own, whereas bad states cause conflicts with other states and are prone to use force to get their way."[47] This worldview certainly transcends the modern era—Thomas Jefferson originally maintained that the United States could only interact within an

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[43] Jeremy Bentham, *Plan for Universal and Perpetual Peace,* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1789/1927), 43.

[44] For additional data regarding Bentham's contributions to international law, see M.W. Janis, "Jeremy Bentham and the Fashioning of International Law," *American Journal of International Law,* 78 (1984), 405-18.

[45] Bentham, *Plan for Universal and Perpetual Peace,* 32, in Michael Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace,* 228.

[46] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* 15.

[47] Michael Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience,* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1978), in Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 16.

international framework led by democratic states.[48] As will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, such an idealistic philosophy presents significant political challenges vis-à-vis the maintenance of order and stability.

Liberal Institutionalism and the Democratic Peace Theory

G. John Ikenberry, an intellectual champion of liberalism, argues that liberal institutions and the character of the post-1945 order have mitigated the probability of great-power conflict. Specifically, Ikenberry suggests that the rise of democratic states and institutional solutions incentivize states to set limits on their power.[49] This view emphasizes the restrictions levied on American power through Washington's participation in liberal, supranational institutions, e.g. the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank etc. In principle, other (weaker) states accept American power because they "share sovereignty" within the parameters of overarching political institutions.[50]

Ikenberry asserts the historical uniqueness of the liberal international order, setting it apart from previous attempts at global governance:

> Liberal international order can be seen as a distinctive type of international order…it is an order that is open and loosely rule-based. Openness is manifest when states trade and exchange on the basis of mutual gain. Rules and institutions operate as mechanisms of governance—and they are at least partially autonomous from the exercise of state power. In its ideal form, liberal international order creates a foundation in which states can engage in reciprocity and institutionalized cooperation. As such, liberal international order can be contrasted with closed and non-rule-based relations—whether geopolitical blocs,

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[48] Smith, *America's Mission,* 85.
[49] G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, 18.
[50] Ikenberry, *After Victory,* 38.

exclusive regional spheres, or closed imperial systems.[51]

In addition to institutions, liberal theory proposes that economic interdependence, as well as the domestic composition of states, makes conflict between them unlikely. The democratic peace theory declares that democracies do not go to war against each other.[52] In other words, if a preponderance of democracies filled the world, the use of force in international relations could be significantly minimized. This argument does not suggest that democracies are less warlike than non-democracies, but rather that democratic states avoid conflict with *other* democracies.[53] The implications of the democratic peace theory for American foreign policy speak directly to questions about how the United States views itself. Subsequent chapters will analyze the merits of foreign intervention in support of democracy promotion. There is, however, perhaps no clearer post-Cold War example of the democratic peace theory's influence on Washington's foreign policy than the introduction to the 2006 National Security Strategy:

> It is the policy of the United States to seek and support democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world. In the world today, the fundamental character of regimes matters as much as the distribution of power among them. The goal of our statecraft is to help create a world of democratic, well-governed states that can meet the needs of their citizens and conduct themselves responsibly in the international system. This is the best way to provide enduring security for the American people.[54]

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[51] G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, 18.

[52] Michael W. Doyle, *Liberalism and World Politics,* American Political Science Review 80, No. 4 (December 1986), pp. 1151-69.

[53] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* 16.

[54] The White House, (2006), *National Security Strategy*, retrieved 25 February 2016 from: http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2006/

Realist and liberal philosophies loom large in the debate surrounding America's preference for democracy promotion. As previously noted, the ideological framework for and against democracy promotion efforts resides within these two schools of international relations. The next chapter explores the transition from theoretical assumptions to active foreign policy and analyzes the chronology of democracy promotion initiatives in American history. It highlights the enduring debate concerning America's role in the world and the subsequent exercise of American power in support of democratic movements.

Chapter 2

The Clash of Idealism and Realism in American Foreign Policy

We are glad . . . to fight thus for the ultimate peace . . . the world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty.
> – *President Woodrow Wilson, speech to Congress requesting a declaration of war against Germany, 2 April, 1917*

We are the only [nation] that is not in any of its parts threatened by powerful neighbors; the only one not under any necessity of keeping up a large armament either on land or water for the security of its possessions; the only one that can turn all the energies of its population to productive employment; the only one that has an entirely free hand. This is a blessing for which the American people can never be too thankful. It should not be lightly jeopardized.
> - *Senator and Ambassador Carl Schurz, in Harper's Magazine, October 1893, warning against American expansionist ambitions in the Western Hemisphere*

Dispelling the Myths – Liberal Expansionism

Since the Treaty of Paris of 1783, the United States has faced an identity crisis. Borrowing from the lexicon of psychology, one might diagnose Washington with a "metaperception gap." In other words, the variance between how Americans perceive themselves and how others perceive Americans is both large and significant. Consequently, Washington's foreign interventions, including democracy promotion efforts, often elicit dramatically varying foreign and domestic reactions. The ensuing internal battle over what America *should* ultimately stand for frequently rages within the arena of foreign policy. This phenomenon has fueled an enduring debate regarding the exercise of military force, both in terms of American territorial expansion and support to democratic movements. It is here that the metaperception gap becomes particularly critical—foreign audiences widely interpret American notions of "democracy promotion" or the "spreading of liberty" as calculated

expansionism. This phenomenon is not simply a product of America's current status as global superpower, but evidenced in some of the earliest diplomatic accounts in American history.

In 1794, the Spanish governor of Louisiana expressed concern that the expansion of the United States' culture as well as its population, "advancing and multiplying in the silence of peace, were to be feared as much by Spain as are their arms."[1] In 1802, French diplomats described a "numerous, warlike, and restless American populace whose ambitions were to be feared."[2] Prince Klemens von Metternich, foreign minister of the Austrian Empire, responded to the 1823 declaration of the Monroe Doctrine by openly disparaging the upstart Americans. Metternich admonished, "[the Americans], whom we have seen arise and grow, leaving a sphere too narrow for their ambition, have astonished Europe by a new act of revolt, more unprovoked, fully as audacious, and no less dangerous than the American Revolution itself."[3] During the same period, Spain's ambassador to France made an eerily prescient assessment of America's future destiny. "This federal republic was born a pigmy," opined the ambassador, "but a day will come when it will be a giant, even a colossus."[4]

Domestic voices also expressed equally impassioned arguments regarding America's role in the world and its increasingly expansionist disposition. Thomas Jefferson, in an 1803 letter to John Breckinridge, outlined his concerns surrounding the proposed annexation of the Louisiana Territory from France. Jefferson wrote, "The Constitution has

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[1] Baron de Carondelet, "Military Report on Louisiana and West Florida," November 24, 1794, in *This Affair of Louisiana* (New York: Scribner's 1976), 57, 59.

[2] Secret Instructions to the Captain-General of Louisiana, November 26, 1802, quoted in Alexander DeConde, *This Affair of Louisiana* (New York: Scribner's, 1976), 150.

[3] Quoted in Bradford Perkins, *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, vol. I: The Creation of a Republican Empire, 1776-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 48, 166.

[4] Quoted in Norman A. Graebner, *Foundations of American Foreign Policy: A Realist Appraisal from Franklin to McKinley,* (Wilmington, DL: Scholarly Resources, 1985), xxxii.

made no provision for our holding foreign territory, still less for incorporating foreign nations into our Union."[5] Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, addressing the House of Representatives on America's role in the world, emphasized, "[America's] glory is not dominion, but liberty. Her march is the march of the mind. She has a spear and a shield, but the motto upon her shield is: Freedom, Independence, Peace. This has been her declaration. This has been, as far as her necessary intercourse with the rest of mankind would permit, her practice."[6] While anti-expansionist voices argued forcefully and eloquently against further territorial acquisitions, they could not halt the powerful forces of Manifest Destiny and liberal internationalism. The following section will examine key historical milestones in American expansionism. Additionally, it will analyze the complicated, interconnected, and often-misunderstood relationship(s) between, liberal ideals, expansionism, and democracy promotion.

From Independence to Empire – 1783-1898

The surrender of Lord Cornwallis' garrison at Yorktown in 1783 signified more than just a major defeat of the world's most capable standing army. Rather, the American victory facilitated a historical anomaly—the birth of the first modern, commercial, liberal republic.[7] In contrast to the autocratic great power regimes of the day, America's foreign policy did not serve the perpetuation of a monarchy or dynasty. For the first time, a national government was committed to preserving ideals and institutions, which essentially made liberalism and American foreign policy one in the same. George Washington, in formulating the

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[5] Thomas Jefferson, letter to John Breckinridge, August 12, 1803, in John Nichols, ed., *Against the Beast: A Documentary History of American Opposition to Empire,* (New York: Avalon Publishing Group, 2004), 14.

[6] John Quincy Adams, July 4, 1821, speech to the House of Representatives regarding America's role in the world, in John Nichols, ed., *Against the Beast: A Documentary History of American Opposition to Empire,* (New York: Avalon Publishing Group, 2004), 22.

[7] Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation: America's Place in the World from its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 71.

initial draft of his First Inaugural Address, wrote: "I rejoice in a belief that intellectual light will spring up in the dark corners of the earth; that freedom of inquiry will produce liberality of conduct; that mankind will reverse the absurd position that the many were made for the few, and that they will not continue slaves in one part of the globe when they can become freemen in another."[8]

The influence of economists such as Adam Smith, whose 1776 treatise *Wealth of Nations* emphasized free trade and open markets, solidified the relationship between liberal ideals and economic power.[9] Robert Kagan suggests that in the early years of the American republic, "Federalists like Hamilton…[and] Republicans like Jefferson and Madison questioned neither the commercial nature of the American people nor the vast benefits to the nation that would be gained by unleashing the forces of commercial liberalism. Their grand scheme was to harness the material ambitions of men and women into a mammoth self-generating engine of national wealth and power."[10]

The French Revolution sparked heated domestic discourse in the United States and marked the establishment of what Tony Smith calls "Pre-Classical Liberal Internationalism."[11] As the revolutionary struggle

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[8] Matthew Spalding and Patrick J. Garrity, *A Sacred Union of Citizens: George Washington's Farewell Address and the American Character,* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996) 113.

[9] Adam Smith, in a twist of historical irony, suggested the American colonies be given representation in the British Parliament proportional to their contributions to public revenues (for more on Smith's proposals, see R. H. Coase (1977), "The Wealth of Nations," *Economic Inquiry* 15(3), pp. 323–25). Prior to the outbreak of the American Revolution, American colonists' primary grievance was their lack of proportional representation within the British Parliament, popularized by the phrase, "taxation without representation is tyranny." From the British perspective, the Crown had depleted its treasury in an expensive, global conflict (the Seven Years' War -1757-1763), during which Britain fought to protect its American colonists from French and Native American encroachment. In the British view, the colonists simply needed to pay their "fair share" of the deficit generated largely in their territorial defense. R.H. Coase goes so far as to suggest that had Britain followed Smith's initial prescription, "there would have been no [revolution] in 1775-1776."

[10] Kagan, *Dangerous Nation*, 73.

[11] Tony Smith, *A Pact with the Devil: Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise,* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2007) 60. Smith

in France became more bloody and gruesome, American political opinion correspondingly fragmented. Two primary ideological camps emerged in the United States: Alexander Hamilton's British-centric faction, which supported Britain's constitutionalist approach against the evils of corrupt rule; and Thomas Jefferson's acolytes, who regarded the French struggle as an ideological cousin of the American Revolution spreading liberty's cause in Europe.[12] Napoleon's ascent to power in 1799 as an expansionist autocrat soured many Americans' outlook on events in France. Americans collectively came to view Imperial France's subsequent domination of Europe as a complete betrayal of the revolutionaries' initial struggle. The United States, a weak power in the early nineteenth century, watched intently for signs of a balance-of-power shift in the European status quo. As Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick observe, Americans in both the Hamiltonian and Jeffersonian camps vacillated between France and Britain regarding which would emerge as a stronger advocate of constitutional governance.[13]

In his 1796 Farewell Address, Washington offered perhaps the first "realist" or "non-interventionist" foreign policy doctrine, advocating a strategy of American neutrality in the face of conflict in Europe. Washington implored:

> The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign
> nations is extending our commercial relations, to have
> with them as little political connection as possible. So
> far, as we have already formed engagements, let them
> be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.
> Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us
> have none; or a very remote relation. Hence, therefore,

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traces the origins of his Pre-Classical Liberal Internationalist period to the 1770s, primarily to the works of Thomas Paine. Specifically, Smith identifies Paine's "anti-monarchist tracts, with their faith in universal self-government under the inspiration of the American Revolution." The broad consensus among the founders of the American republic was that the American model (government founded upon the consent of the governed) would comprise an exemplar for emulation by all mankind.

[12] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 61.

[13] Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788-1800,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance…why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground?[14]

Washington's prophetic admonition—that America must weigh carefully its political interests vis-à-vis foreign entanglements—proved to be a farsighted prognosis of future events and is as relevant to policy debates in the present day as it was the late eighteenth century.

Both the French Revolution and Napoleon's subsequent rise to power sent shock waves throughout the entire world. In particular, regions in which the great powers held colonial possessions became hotbeds of revolutionary sentiment. Spain's descent into political chaos during the Peninsular War of 1807-1814 created opportunities for struggles of liberation to take hold in its Latin American colonies. The United States generally favored these democratic movements, particularly as they signified a categorical rejection of imperial authority and generally aligned with American interests, i.e., keeping European powers out of the Western hemisphere.[15] The unprecedented 1848 revolutions against autocratic establishments in Europe also enjoyed broad support in the United States. Indeed, Americans widely praised these liberty-seeking, revolutionary movements, convinced that the United States' own shining example inspired their adherents.

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[14] George Washington, Farewell Address, 1796. According to author John Nichols, "Washington's words were so influential that, more than a century later, American anti-imperialists gathered annually to celebrate the first president's birthday and to renew their commitment to the principle of avoiding foreign entanglements." (In *Against the Beast: A Documentary History of Opposition to American Opposition to Empire,* (New York: Nation Books, 2004), 13.

[15] In 1823, President James Monroe declared his now famous "Monroe Doctrine," warning European powers that further attempts to either colonize and/or meddle within the internal affairs of North and South American states would be viewed as acts of aggression.

Despite the American public's widespread admiration for global democratic movements in the nineteenth century, the United States concurrently pursued expansionist policies that largely mirrored those of European colonial powers. Henry Kissinger aptly notes that when the United States "practiced what elsewhere was defined as imperialism, Americans gave it another name: the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying-millions."[16] In the minds of many Americans, their country was simply embarking upon a messianic mission divinely inspired by the Almighty. In essence, America's transformational march of liberty supplanted "old world" history entirely, charting a new course without peer in human endeavor. In 1839, the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* printed an article envisioning a future "dominated" by America's moral visions of world order. Its author, John O'Sullivan, suggested:

> The American people having derived their origin from
> many other nations, and the Declaration of National
> Independence being entirely based on the great
> principle of human equality, these facts demonstrate
> at once our disconnected position as regards any other
> nation; that we have, in reality, but little connection
> with the past history of any of them and still less with
> all antiquity, its glories, or its crimes. On the
> contrary, our national birth was the beginning of a
> new history. We are the nation of human progress,
> and who will, what can, set limits to our onward
> march? Providence is with us, and no earthly power
> can.[17]

Thus, as European revolutionaries were rising up against autocratic regimes in 1848, the United States was concluding its first

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[16] John O'Sullivan, *"Annexation," United States Magazine and Democratic Review,* July-August, 1845, 5., in Henry Kissinger, *World Order,* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), 240.

[17] John O'Sullivan, "The Great Nation of Futurity," *United States Magazine and Democratic Review,* November 1839, 426-427.

offensive, foreign war against Mexico.[18] President James K. Polk, an
ardent proponent of Manifest Destiny, "embraced Jacksonian,
expansionist instincts," which ultimately catapulted him to the White
House.[19] The American annexation of Texas in 1845 set the stage for a
downward spiral in US-Mexican relations, fueled by America's assertion
that the Rio Grande was its southernmost border.[20] When the American
victory was finally achieved in 1848, the United States dramatically
expanded its territory to include what today comprises modern New
Mexico, Utah, Nevada, and California. Although not fought principally in
the name of democracy promotion, the Mexican War is historically
significant as it marked America's first military occupation of foreign
territory. Otis Singletary writes of the conflict, "the undeniable fact that it
was an offensive war so completely stripped it of moral pretensions that
no politician of the era ever succeeded in elevating it to the lofty level of a
crusade."[21]

Even as the American dream of expansion to the Pacific was
realized under President Polk, there was no scarcity of opposition to his
administration's war with its southern neighbor. Abraham Lincoln
recalled his vehement opposition to "Mr. Polk's War," which he deemed
an offensive war of subjugation. "You remember I was an old Whig,"
Lincoln retorted during an 1858 debate against Stephen Douglas, "and
whenever the Democratic Party tried to get me to vote that the war had
been righteously begun by the president, I would not do it."[22] Senator

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[18] Robert W. Johannsen*, To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 7.
[19] Robert W. Merry, *A Country of Vast Designs: James K. Polk, the Mexican War, and the Conquest of the American Continent,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009).
[20] Johannsen*, To the Halls of the Montezumas*, 7.
[21] Otis Singletary, *The Mexican War,* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 5.
[22] Abraham Lincoln, Debate at Ottawa Illinois, August 21, 1858, from the Abraham Lincoln Home National Historic Site, National Park Service,
http://www.nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/debate1.htm, accessed March 21, 2016.
According to author Mark Neely, Lincoln was on the defensive during this debate as
"Douglas charged him [Lincoln] with trying to "abolitionize" the Whig and Democratic

Thomas Corwin of Ohio, in his February 1847 remarks on the Senate floor, declared, "Mr. President, this uneasy desire to augment our territory has depraved the moral sense and blunted the otherwise keen sagacity of our people. Our young orators cherish this notion [of war] with a fervid but fatally mistaken zeal. They call it by the mysterious name of 'destiny.' What is the territory, Mr. President, which you propose to wrest from Mexico?"[23] Despite the heated debate surrounding the Mexican War, American territorial expansion via military force would continue towards its apex at the close of the nineteenth century.

Democracy in Crisis – Civil War and the Restoration of the Union

America's significant territorial acquisitions from the Mexican War did not settle rising internal discord regarding the expansion of slavery and the nation's future direction. Only a devastating, four-year civil war would prove the ultimate arbiter of the irreconcilable differences between North and South. Yet, the American Civil War offers a particular example of conflicting perceptions surrounding democracy and a foreshadowing of future struggles in the name of democracy promotion. Indeed, the term "democracy promotion" is not commonly associated with studies of the American Civil War—the majority of historical accounts emphasize issues such as slavery and states' rights as the war's principal catalysts. John Keegan, however, notes that both the Union and Confederate armies comprised some of the most "ideological" military forces ever fielded.[24] President Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation elevated the conflict in the minds of many northerners to a sacred crusade for freedom. Furthermore, it solidified implications that

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Parties. He also charged Lincoln had been present when a very radical "abolitionist" type platform had been written by the Republican Party in 1854. Douglas accused Lincoln of taking the side of the common enemy in the Mexican War," in Mark E. Neely Jr., *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia*, (New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1982).
[23] Senator Thomas Corwin, (Ohio), Senate speech leading Congressional opposition to the U.S. invasion of Mexico, Congressional Record, February 11, 1847.
[24] John Keegan, quoted in James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 94.

the domestic battle for liberty translated to a worldwide struggle for freedom-seeking peoples. "If we succeed," various Union soldiers wrote to their relatives, "then you may look for European struggles for liberty…but, [if we fail], the onward march of Liberty in the Old World [would be] retarded at least a century."[25]

America's messianic mission for freedom and democracy would first require the pacification of insurgent elements within its own borders. Here the metaperception gap analogy elucidates an important parallel: northerners profoundly misunderstood their southern neighbors' inability to join the "march toward freedom and liberty." Much like Americans of future centuries, who expressed disbelief at other nations' reluctance to abandon "forsaken" struggles and "embrace" American ideals and values, northerners failed to comprehend what was at stake for the South.[26] Southerners, many of whom believed they were waging a "second American Revolution," fought to maintain a way of life. Viewed in this light, secession represented a natural continuation of the democratic process itself. King George III's tyrannical reign over the colonists was simply transposed in the image of Mr. Lincoln's government threatening the South. Acquiescing to northern demands would not only contradict southern principles, but also risk the Confederates' own demise "at the hands of their former slaves."[27] Aside from its harrowing cost in human lives (Civil War casualties account for more deaths than all American wars combined), the war demonstrated the potency of Americans' collective core beliefs and their willingness to impose them on those who did not share them.[28] More important, 1865

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[25] Josiah Perry to Phebe Perry, October 3, 1862, Perry Papers, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield; William H.H. Ibbetson, diary, undated entry sometime in the winter of 1863-64. Illinois State Historical Library; Robert T. McMahan, September 3, 1863, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, all quoted in McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades,* 112, 113.

[26] Kagan, *Dangerous Nation,* 266.

[27] Kagan, *Dangerous Nation,* 266.

[28] James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era,* (Oxford University Press, 2003), xix.

signified a triumph for liberal democracy—the Union remained intact, molding the United States into a potentially formidable country on a global scale, and carrying profound implications for the future of democracy in the twentieth century.[29] Robert Kagan's insightful analysis highlights the broader consequences of the Civil War on future American foreign policy:

> The Civil War was America's second great moral war,
> but unlike the Revolution it was a war of conquest.
> The North liberated the oppressed segment of the
> South's population and subjugated the oppressors. It
> established a decade-long military occupation of the
> South's territory, and attempted to reform political and
> economic systems that would prevent a return to the
> old ways. The Civil War was America's first experiment
> in ideological conquest, therefore, and what followed
> was America's first experiment in 'nation-building.'[30]

The conclusion of the Civil War seemingly suggested Americans were determined to put visions of grand military power to rest. Having successfully restored their union—the "last best hope of earth"— America's massive military machine was no longer deemed necessary.[31] In nearly unprecedented fashion the United States Army shrank from a peak of 1,034,064 men at arms in 1865 to 54,302 regular troops and 11,000 volunteers by 1867.[32] Despite America's rapidly increasing global prominence, notions of an "American Empire" elicited widespread condemnation even as late as 1885. President Grover Cleveland, in his inaugural address, rejected:

> Any departure from that foreign policy commended by
> the history, the traditions, and the prosperity of our
> Republic. It is the policy of independence, favored by
> our position and defended by our known love of justice
> and by our power. It is the policy of peace suitable to

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[29] Smith, *America's Mission,* 26.
[30] Kagan, *Dangerous Nation,* 269.
[31] Kissinger, *World Order,* 245.
[32] Amanda Foreman, *A World on Fire: Britain's Crucial Role in the American Civil War,* (New York: Random House, 2011), 784.

our interests. It is the policy of *neutrality* [emphasis added], rejecting any share in foreign broils and ambitions upon other continents and repelling their intrusion here.[33]

Turning Point: The Spanish-American War and American Empire

Figure 2: 1900 McKinley/Roosevelt Presidential Campaign Poster

The Spanish-American War of 1898 marks a fundamental turning point in the history of liberal internationalism. The conflict forced Americans to come to terms with their country's position as a truly global power. In terms of foreign policy, the war signifies the transition from pre-classical liberal internationalism to its classic period.[34] Tony Smith differentiates the classic phase of liberal internationalism in that, "now Washington would use force for the sake of other peoples, especially for those cruelly oppressed by Spanish rule in Cuba but also in the Philippines. And it could draw up a balance sheet that showed foreign possessions worth the effort in terms of what they might bring to the United States."[35]

By the early 1890s, the United States' mounting economic might, combined with its geographic isolation from any major great power,

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[33] Grover Cleveland, First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1855, in *The Public Papers of Grover Cleveland,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1889), 8.
[34] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 62.
[35] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 62.

triggered a shift in American strategic thought. Frederick Jackson Turner posited in an 1893 paper "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" that the foundation of America's economic success was predicated on a "free land" thesis.[36] In Turner's assessment, America's continental expansion, embodied by the image of the perpetually shifting frontier yielding more free land, was the *sine qua non* of American advancement.[37] Turner's analysis also carried with it a cautionary note: absent the economic dynamism associated with the expanding frontier, American socio-political establishments would languish.[38] To Turner's mind, the choice was stark—America must either expand or cease to exist.[39] While Turner did not argue explicitly for overseas expansion, he concluded his analysis with a revelatory observation—"four centuries from the discovery of America…the frontier is gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history."[40] After Turner's presentation, then Federal Civil Service Commissioner Theodore Roosevelt responded in a laudatory note, "I think you have struck some first class ideas, and have put into definite shape a good deal of thought which has been floating around rather loosely."[41]

While Turner's concepts resonated with the future president, Ivan Musicant observes that Turner's conclusions did not create waves in

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[36] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), 30. Turner's original paper later became part of the 1921 book published by Henry Holt and Company, entitled, *The Frontier in American History.*
[37] Ivan Musicant, *Empire by Default: The Spanish-American War and the Dawn of the American Century,* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), 4.
[38] Musicant, *Empire by Default,* 4.
[39] Turner, *The Frontier in American History,* 30. Turner pointed to the U.S Census Bureau's April 1891 Bulletin No. 12 as official evidence of the frontier's extinction. James Bennett, in his work *Frederick Jackson Turner,* highlights that Turner's work referenced the Census report to prove "the frontier was so broken into isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line…it cannot, therefore, have a place in the census reports." See James D. Bennett, *Frederick Jackson Turner,* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 42.
[40] Turner, *The Frontier in American History,* 38. Turner was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize for *The Frontier in American History* in 1933.
[41] Wilbur R. Jacobs, ed., *The Historical World of Frederick Jackson Turner,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 4.

foreign policy circles or receive much attention in the press.[42] Where Turner declared the frontier gone, Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, perhaps the most notable American maritime theorist, advocated extending the frontier beyond America's shores.[43] Mahan, whose 1889 book *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* commanded considerable influence in US and global policy circles, argued that exploiting sea power was the key determinant of a nation's successful economic and military standing.[44] Mahan called the ocean a vast "highway," or a "wide common over which men may pass in all directions."[45]

In developing his theory of sea power, Mahan associated Britain's successful rise as a global power with its dominance of the seas. Unlike European continental powers, which shared borders with peer competitors, Britain's geographic isolation and maritime dominance allowed the small nation to avoid protracted land wars and acquire a vast empire. In particular, Mahan cited the importance of overseas colonies as "stations along the road," identifying strategic points such as the Hawaiian Islands and the Panama Canal.[46] With the American frontier now settled, it was time to chart a new course. "Whether they will or no," wrote Mahan, "Americans must now begin to look outward."[47]

America's total national wealth in 1890 exceeded $65 billion, a figure greater than both the British Empire and the combined economic outputs of Germany and Russia.[48] Washington's rapid economic ascendance elevated America's international profile and influence. From this newfound position of prominence, policymakers in Washington emanated a decidedly different tone regarding foreign policy. In 1895

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[42] Musicant, *Empire by Default,* 5.

[43] Musicant, *Empire by Default,* 9.

[44] Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783,* (New York: Cosimo Press Edition, 2007), 25.

[45] Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History,* 26.

[46] Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History,* 28.

[47] Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The United States Looking Outward," in *The Interest of America in Sea Power,* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1897), 21-22.

[48] Musicant, *Empire by Default,* 11.

Secretary of State Richard Olney cautioned Britain—then embroiled in a border row with Venezuela over British Guiana—of the United States' dominant place in the western hemisphere: "Today, the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law," bellowed Olney.[49] "[America's] infinite resources," Olney continued, "combined with its isolated position render it master of the situation and practically invulnerable as against any or all other powers."[50]

When the Spanish Empire faced an open revolt in Cuba, America had found its moment to translate principles into power. Since its inception, the anti-imperial struggle of Cuba's *insurrectos* had gained much sympathy in the United States. The rebellion began in earnest in 1868, raging for nearly three decades until Cuban insurgents, failing to secure a seaport, dispersed throughout the island.[51] In order to quell the insurgency, Spain sent General Valeriano Weyler to Cuba with more than 200,000 troops.[52] Weyler implemented a brutal policy of "reconcentration" against the civilian populace, hoping to eliminate the insurgents' domestic sources of support.[53] American newspapers publicized Weyler's tactics of forcing insurgents and suspected civilians, including women and children, onto makeshift camps with inadequate supplies.[54]

Leading American public figures and journalists openly decried Spain's "heavy-handed" methods in Cuba, gradually building a domestic support base for American intervention. Newspaper reports, however,

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[49] Thomas G. Paterson, J. Gary Clifford, and Kenneth J. Hagan, *American Foreign Policy: A History,* (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath Publishers, 1977), 89, in Kissinger, *World Order,* 245.

[50] Paterson, Clifford, Hagan, *American Foreign Policy,* 89, in Kissinger, *World Order,* 245.

[51] John Offner, "Why Did the United States Fight Spain in 1898?" *OAH Magazine of History,* Vol. 12, No.3, The War of 1898 (Spring, 1998) 19-23. Spain considered Cuba an "extension of the Iberian Peninsula" in the Caribbean; from Madrid's perspective, granting independence to Cuba would have been akin to the United States losing Texas, Florida, or another large state. It is important to consider this perspective when examining the rationale behind the Spanish strategy to quell the insurgency.

[52] Offner, "Why Did the United States Fight Spain in 1898?" 19-23.

[53] Offner, "Why Did the United States Fight Spain in 1898?" 19-23.

[54] Offner, "Why Did the United States Fight Spain in 1898?" 19-23.

only built upon pre-existing, negative perceptions Americans harbored toward Spain. American scholarship and textbooks of the day portrayed Spain as an anachronistic imperial power with a corrupt monarchy and failing economy—Spain's loyalty to the Catholic church further contributed to the country's "old world" image to many Americans.[55] Senator and former Secretary of War Redfield Proctor decried the humanitarian crisis in Cuba during a speech to the Red Cross in March 1898. "Deaths in the streets have not been uncommon," Proctor declared, "I was told by one of our consuls that people have been found dead about the markets in the morning where they had crawled hoping to get some stray bits of food. What I saw I cannot tell so others can see it; it must be seen with one's own eyes to be realized."[56]

President William McKinley initially endeavored to prevent armed conflict with Spain, but events in Cuba soon spiraled out of control.[57] The February 1898 explosion aboard the USS *Maine* in Havana harbor provoked an outpouring of American support for war with Spain. Although the origin of the explosion was never determined, public opinion had rendered its judgment—Spain was guilty. The United States declared war on Spain and began its first conflict with a major European power overseas since the War of 1812.[58] In less than four months of fighting, the United States ended five hundred years of Spanish presence in the Caribbean, taking possession of Cuba and Puerto Rico. It also annexed Hawaii in 1897 and seized Guam and the Philippines.[59]

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[55] Richard L. Kagan, "Prescott's Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the Decline of Spain," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (April 1996): 423-446; Gerald F. Linderman, *The Mirror of War: American Society and the Spanish-American War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974)

[56] Statement of Senator Redfield Proctor, March 17, 1898, printed in Clara Barton, *The Red Cross* (Washington: American National Red Cross, 1899), 534-539.

[57] Kagan, *Dangerous Nation,* 396.

[58] Kissinger, *World Order,* 246.

[59] The American annexation of Hawaii was not a result of the Spanish-American War, but did highlight Washington's imperial tendencies of the time.   Jeffrey Engel, Mark Atwood Lawrence, and Andrew Preston note that, "the American takeover of Hawaii began in 1887, when U.S. businessmen, backed by the threat of violence, coerced the

Declaring the righteousness of America's action, President McKinley's 1900 re-election poster stated boldly, "the American flag has not been planted in foreign soil to acquire more territory, but for humanity's sake."[60]

Assessing the results of American territorial acquisitions in 1901, Alfred Thayer Mahan wrote, "I might say I was up to 1885 traditionally an anti-imperialist; but by 1890 the study of the influence of sea power and its kindred expansive activities upon the destiny of nations converted me."[61] Indeed, the United States' naval buildup during the late nineteenth century proved instrumental in both acquiring and maintaining America's vast new territories. Ivan Musicant concludes his work, *Empire by Default,* with the following assessment:

> By 1899, the United States had forged a new empire. American politicians, naval officers, and businessmen had created it amid much debate and with conscious purpose. The empire expanded from the continental frontier, as defined by Frederick Jackson Turner, to pre-eminence in the Western Hemisphere, and, for good or ill, into the farthest reaches of the Pacific. America, as Alfred Thayer Mahan had predicted, now looked outward.[62]

Hawaiian king to sign the "bayonet constitution," stripping natives of most of their rights. Six years later, Queen Liliuokalani, the new monarch, was overthrown in a coup organized by American planters, who established a republic dominated by U.S.-born elites." In Jeffrey Engel, Mark Atwood Lawrence, Andrew Preston, *America in the World: A History from the War with Spain to the War on Terror,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 27.

[60] Quoted from July 12, 1900, on 1900 U.S. Presidential election campaign poster of William McKinley and his choice for second term Vice President, Theodore Roosevelt.

[61] Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Retrospect and Prospect: Studies in International Relations, Naval and Political* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1902), 18.

[62] Musicant, *Empire by Default,* 658.

President Woodrow Wilson - Making the World Safe for Democracy

Figure 3: 1917 U.S. Navy Recruitment Poster, Clifford Carelton, Erie Lithograph Company, Erie, Pennsylvania (1916-1918).

The presidency of Woodrow Wilson, perhaps more than any other, embodies both the spirit of liberal internationalism and the original "blueprint" for America's democracy promotion efforts. Wilson's internationalist vision would inspire subsequent US administrations throughout the twentieth century and beyond. Tony Smith astutely notes that Wilson's policy recommendations marked "the first time that the United States had elaborated a framework for world order. It proposed that governments recognize each others' legitimacy when they were constitutional democracies, and that they should maintain the peace through a system of collective military security and liberal economic exchange."[63]

Wilson's approach to democracy promotion was particular in that he framed the expansion of democratic governance overseas as a means of bolstering American security.[64] Nonetheless, the Wilsonian vision of liberal democratic internationalism did not diverge greatly from Washington's historic, established security policies.[65] As previously noted, Thomas Jefferson originally contended the United States could only be a part of a global community based on a preponderance of

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[63] Smith, *America's Mission,* 84.
[64] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 63.
[65] Smith, *America's Mission,* 84.

democratic states. From the Greek Revolution of 1821 to the plight of the Cuban *reconcentrados* in 1898, America looked favorably upon democratic movements. In Wilson's day, however, shifting international political developments exerted a strong influence on his conceptualization of the world order. The emergence of Soviet communism in 1917 presented alternative ideological models of governance, economics, and nationalism. World War I overturned former notions of global order. The Russian, Ottoman, and Austro-Hungarian Empires—former guarantors of regional balances of power—were relegated precipitously to the dustbin of history.

In the shadow of these sweeping events, Wilson conceived critical precepts in American foreign policy that would leave an enduring legacy:

> That nationalism should be respected as one of the most powerful political sentiments of our times; that democracy is the most peace-loving and only legitimate form of modern government, and that the United States has a self-interested as well as moral obligation to further its prospects abroad; that democracy and capitalism are mutually reinforcing systems of collective action so long as large accumulations of wealth do not control the political process; that in a world destined to be composed of many states, the need for mutual understanding calls for a new respect for international law, and that a global system of collective security is necessary to stop aggression.[66]

Wilson's emphasis on the domestic character of states was predicated upon his conviction that democratic foundations translated directly to an optimal arrangement of the broader international order. As will be subsequently assessed, much domestic and international criticism of Wilson's worldview cited a perceived naïveté regarding the feasibility of a democratic order, the character of states, and the proper position of the United States in the world. Wilson's noble ideas may have foretold an optimistic future, argued his critics; but a significant gap

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[66] Smith, *America's Mission,* 85-86.

remained between their pronouncement and realization. John Maynard Keynes leveled the following condemnation of Wilsonianism:

> [Wilson] had thought out nothing; when it came to practice, his ideas were nebulous and incomplete. He had no plan, no scheme, no constructive ideas whatsoever for clothing with the flesh of life the commandments which he had thundered from the White House. He could have preached a sermon on any of them or have addressed a stately prayer to the Almighty for their fulfillment, be he could not frame their concrete application when it came [time to act].[67]

Wilson, however, displayed more strategic thought and calculation than many of his critics realized. Liberal internationalism did not simply comprise a revisionist view of "what ought to be" in the world; rather, it was foundationally linked to the president's conception of American national security. Barely a week into his administration, Wilson declared a pioneering "non-recognition" doctrine vis-à-vis Latin America, with a particular emphasis on Mexico, which found itself in the midst of a transformational revolution.[68] "We hold," Wilson announced, "that government rests always upon the consent of the governed and that there can be no freedom without order based upon law and upon the public conscience and approval. We can have no sympathy with those who seek to seize the power of government to advance their own personal interest or ambition…there can be no lasting peace in such circumstances."[69] Wilson understood that a stable Mexico, with a large, growing population and an immense, contiguous border with the United States, was paramount to America's security interests.[70]

As Mahan had noted earlier, the Caribbean basin, Central

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[67] John Maynard Keynes, *Essays in Biography,* (Horizon Books, 1951), 21f. See also Gary Wills, "The Presbyterian Nietzsche," *New York Review of Books,* January 16, 1992.
[68] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 63.
[69] "A Statement on Relations with Latin America," in Arthur S. Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 27:172.
[70] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 63.

America, and the Panama Canal now became strategic regions through which American commerce flowed. Wilson affirmed the region's strategic significance by declaring Nicaragua an American protectorate in 1914 and occupying militarily the Dominican Republic in 1916—ostensibly to prevent potential interventions by European creditors, but also to bring democracy to the population.[71] While neither of the aforementioned actions successfully carried democracy to either country, governments friendly towards the United States did emerge. In a strictly realist sense, then, one might deduce that Wilson achieved his objective of protecting American interests. Contrarily, in his deeply philosophical outlook, Wilson eschewed autocracies reliant upon American power. He instead determined the true key to stability to be the coexistence of democratic peoples working towards prosperity and harmony facilitated by democratic self-determination.[72]

Wilson at War – A Struggle for the Liberation of All Peoples

In 1914, the assassination of Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand set off a chain reaction in which alliance obligations plunged European powers into a bloody, protracted war. What began as an Austro-Hungarian and Serbian dilemma quickly became a pan-European, and eventually global, conflict.[73] When the United States

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[71] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 64.

[72] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 64.

[73] For more on the origins of World War I, see Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August* (New York: Dell, 1962), and Imanuel Geiss, *The Outbreak of the First World War: Selected Documents* (New York: W.W. Norton Publishers, 1967), Steven Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Summer, 1984), pp. 58-107. Many historical accounts charge Wilhelmine Germany's expansionist policies as the catalyst for aggression that plunged Europe into World War I. However, the dynamics surrounding World War I were not "new" per se. The inherent quest of states to maintain their security and seek value-maximizing alliances is a hallmark of strategic discourse dating to Thucydides. Rather, Germany's encouragement of Austria's prosecution of the conflict with Serbia and its declaration of war on Russia reflected more about German concerns regarding its own security. The emergence of a unified Germany unquestionably upset the balance of power in Europe. The dangerous combination of a fundamental disruption of the established political order, strategic miscalculations on the part of all belligerents regarding their

declared war on Germany in 1917, Wilson framed the struggle in terms of democracy versus unbridled militarism. The United States would fight for the "ultimate peace of the world, and for the liberation of its peoples, the *German peoples included* [emphasis added]."[74]

Both Wilson's failure to secure ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and the inadequacies thereof in maintaining the European balance of power are well established. Ikenberry partly attributes these failures to the "associate position of the United States in the alliance— this status made it less credible as a leader of the peace settlement. Even if the United States had played a more commanding role in the war, it is not clear that Wilson would have used that power effectively to coopt the allies into a common agreement."[75] True to his vision of a worldwide democratic transformation, Wilson perhaps misread the extent to which situational dynamics had shifted since America's entry in 1917. Ikenberry criticizes Wilson's approach in that, "Wilson hitched his liberal peace program to the great forces of war and social change that he saw unfolding around him. Although these forces worked in his favor in 1918, they worked against him in 1919. The war brought the United States to a new position of power…but, Wilson's own conceptions of global historical change undercut an institutional agreement that was within his reach."[76]

The Treaty of Versailles may have failed in its objectives, but the same is not true of Wilsonianism's legacy. Although his visions of world order were not implemented in 1919, they gained new life after the Allies' victory in 1945. As Tony Smith observes, "liberal internationalism had

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adversaries' intentions, and a misguided adherence to an offensive-based strategy drove the European powers toward conflict in 1914.

[74] Quoted in Lloyd Gardner, "The United States, the German Peril, and a Revolutionary World: The Inconsistencies of World Order and National Self-Determination, in Hans-Jürgen Schroder, ed., *Confrontation and Cooperation: Germany and the United States in the Era of World War I, 1900-1924* (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 272.

[75] G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 161.

[76] Ikenberry, *After Victory*, 162.

now become enough of an ideology—a coherent set of ideas covering a wide array of social questions that could mobilize the support of many interests and specify political institutional forms to be taken."[77] The biggest global challenges to the American model of democratic governance would present themselves during the inter-war period and culminate with the founding of the liberal world order at the end of World War II.

Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Construction of the Liberal Order

The Second World War pitted the forces of liberal democracy, fascism, and communism against each other in an epic struggle. Inheriting Wilson's legacy, Roosevelt openly referred to the United States as the "arsenal of democracy," even before America's entry into the conflict. The failure of the Treaty of Versailles, however, coupled with widespread disenchantment with the experience of World War I, generated major isolationist sentiment in the United States.   Influential voices, such as that of former President Herbert Hoover, recognized the United States could not remain completely disconnected from the rest of the world. But Hoover and many of his contemporaries did not view Nazi Germany as an existential threat to America.[78] The former president asked in 1939, "are we to be the policemen of the world?"[79] Hoover continued, "We may first explore the imminent dangers of military attack

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[77] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 67.

[78] Joseph P. Kennedy, father of the future president and U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom (1938-1940), was an additional powerful voice against American involvement in the war. In November 1940, during the midst of the Battle of Britain, Kennedy conducted an interview with the *Boston Sunday Globe.* The Ambassador's declarations largely contradicted the Roosevelt administration's policies and led to Kennedy's removal: "It's all a question of what we do with the next six months," he said. "The whole reason for aiding England is to give us time...As long as she is in there, we have time to prepare. It isn't that [Britain is] fighting for democracy. That's the bunk. She's fighting for self-preservation, just as we will if it comes to us...I know more about the European situation than anybody else, and it's up to me to see that the country gets it." For more on Kennedy's stance, see "Kennedy Says Democracy All Done," *Boston Sunday Globe,* November 10, 1940.

[79] "Hoover's Address on 'New Departure' in Our Foreign Policy," *New York Times,* February 2, 1939. For more on President Hoover's policy positions, see Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, http://www.hooverassociation.org.

upon the Western democracies. And again we should consider it in the light of realism rather than the irritating words that emanate from world capitals. Do not think I believe the situation is not dangerous in Europe...but it is not so imminent as the speeches abroad might make it appear. And what is not imminent is often preventable."[80]

President Roosevelt, as leader of a non-belligerent country, soon found himself in the difficult position of publicly supporting "democratic" (or non-Axis) states and maintaining concurrent neutrality. Nonetheless, Roosevelt sought to target repressive regimes, such as Japan, by exploiting America's economic might through embargos. Roosevelt's economic sanction policies were not universally accepted—even within his own administration. As late as July 1941, Roosevelt's Navy Department warned against a proposed US oil embargo on the Japanese Empire. In a policy memo, the Navy Department's War Plans Division projected, "an embargo would probably result in a fairly early attack by Japan on Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, and possibly would involve the United States in early war in the Pacific. If the war in the Pacific is to be accepted by the United States, actions leading up to it should, if practicable, be postponed until Japan is engaged in war in Siberia. Recommendation: That trade with Japan not be embargoed at this time."[81] Roosevelt, hoping to impede Japan's imperial ambitions in East Asia, subsequently enacted the oil embargo against Japan in September 1941. Only three months later, the United States was at war.

By 1945, the Allies had triumphed over the Axis Powers, bringing the most devastating war in world history to a successful conclusion. Roosevelt would not live to see the fruits of his great victory, however, as he died on 12 April 1945—less than a month before Germany's

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[80] Hoover's Address on 'New Departure' in Our Foreign Policy," *New York Times,* February 2, 1939.

[81] "The Director of the War Plans Division of the Navy Department (Turner) to the Chief of Naval Operations (Stark), July 19, 1941, [The Possible Effects of an Embargo]," in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States,* 1941, vol. 4, *The Far East,* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1956), 839-40.

capitulation.[82] Before his passing, Roosevelt tirelessly developed and refined his grand designs for an eventual post-war world order. In this respect, Roosevelt outdid even Woodrow Wilson in articulating his vision of international peace.[83] Roosevelt's immediate U.S. post-war objective was to rally the democratic states into a transparent, multilateral, economic order, guaranteed by overarching global institutions.[84]

Hosting an international conference at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, Roosevelt's Administration endeavored to craft a framework for global, post-war economic organization. By employing America's commanding economic power in concert with its military machine, Roosevelt's team laid the foundations of contemporary institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Roosevelt rightly recognized the importance of American leadership in holding this new order together. His successor, Harry Truman, would follow Roosevelt's blueprint for peace through economic development. Robert Gilpin notes, "the United States assumed primary responsibility for the management of the world monetary system beginning with the Marshall Plan and partially under the guise of the IMF. The Federal Reserve became the world's banker, and the dollar became the basis of the international monetary system."[85]

Roosevelt also set the stage for democracy promotion efforts in the twentieth century. Underscoring his belief that the democratic character of domestic governance translated directly to states' external behavior, Roosevelt insisted that Allied occupations of both Germany and Japan focus on democratization.[86] He declared at the February 1945 Yalta Conference:

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[82] Jean Edward Smith, *FDR,* (New York: Random House Publishers, 2007), 636.
[83] Kissinger, *World Order,* 270.
[84] Ikenberry, *After Victory,* 165.
[85] Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 133-34.
[86] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 68.

> The establishment of order in Europe and the
> rebuilding of national economic life must be achieved
> by processes which will enable the liberated peoples to
> destroy the last vestiges of Nazism and Fascism and to
> create democratic institutions of their own choice.
> This is a principle of the Atlantic Charter—the right of
> all peoples to choose the form of government under
> which they will live—the restoration of sovereign rights
> and self-government to those peoples who have been
> forcibly deprived of them by the aggressor nations.[87]

Roosevelt also understood that European-inspired imperialism did not fit within his vision of democratic order. As such, he actively called upon America's European allies to grant independence to their colonial possessions.[88] This policy did not sit particularly well with Great Britain, America's closest ally in World War II. In many respects, the British viewed American efforts to refashion the world into a democratic order as a veiled attempt at global hegemony.[89] The following January 1945 discussion between President Roosevelt and British Colonial Secretary Oliver Stanley succinctly captures this skeptical sentiment:

Roosevelt: I do not want to be unkind or rude to the British, but in 1841, when you acquired Hong Kong, you did not acquire it by purchase.

Stanley: Let me see, Mr. President, that was about the time of the Mexican War, wasn't it?[90]

Although he fostered an "alliance of convenience" with Joseph Stalin to defeat Germany, Roosevelt hoped Moscow would allow the people of Central European to determine their own futures. For his part, Stalin—deeply suspicious of Western intentions—displayed little desire to make concessions. According to Henry Kissinger, "the goodwill of the

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[87] Franklin D. Roosevelt, Joint Declaration on a Liberated Europe, Yalta Conference Proceedings, February 11, 1945, in Justus D. Doenecke and Mark A. Stoler, *Debating Franklin D. Roosevelt's Foreign Policies: 1933-1945,* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 208.

[88] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 68.

[89] Smith, *America's Mission,* 127.

[90] Cited in John J. Sbrega, "The Anticolonial Views of Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Reappraisal," *Political Science Quarterly,* 101, no. 1, 1986.

[U.S./Russian] wartime alliance was 'subjective' and superseded by the new circumstances of victory. The goal of Soviet strategy would be to achieve the maximum security for the inevitable showdown. This meant pushing the security borders of Russia as far west as possible and weakening the countries beyond the security borders through Communist parties and operations."[91] In only a few months after the conclusion of the Second World War, it became clear that the United States and the Soviet Union shared diametrically opposing visions of how to order the world. While the two great powers would never fight a full-scale war against each other, their security competition would cast a dark shadow over nearly half of the twentieth century.

The Cold War: Democracy Promotion in a Bi-Polar Order

The devastation wrought by the Second World War ended the European great powers' primacy on the international stage. In 1945, only one great power remained in Europe: Stalin's Soviet Union.[92] The United States, however, emerged from World War II in a considerably more advantageous position than in 1919. Washington was not a simply an "associate" partner as it had been in World War I, but rather *the* most powerful, influential, and indispensable Allied nation. Ikenberry notes that the genius of Washington's post-war order was its "mutually agreeable" nature, underpinned by power-sharing agreements that bound America to international organizations."[93] In this instance, the United States *did* exploit its dominant military and economic position to bind additional industrial powers into a construct characterized by both economic and political openness.[94]

The Allied failure of the League of Nations drove American policymakers' aspirations to craft a more resilient structural framework.

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[91] Kissinger, *World Order,* 273.
[92] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* (New York: Norton and Company, 2014 ed.), 355.
[93] Ikenberry, *After Victory,* 210.
[94] Ikenberry, *After Victory,* 210.

As a result, Ikenberry emphasizes that, "realist lessons were combined with liberal lessons from the regional imperialism and mercantilist conflict of the 1930s. The United States did show more willingness to use its military victory and the occupation to implement its postwar aims in Germany and Japan. But those aims, nonetheless, were . . . liberal in character."[95] Across the globe, American policymakers struggled to ensure previously Axis-aligned or Axis-occupied states were on the path to democracy. In doing so, the Americans systematically established a precedent of supporting democratic movements by default—a policy that would ultimately result in irreconcilable outcomes later in the Cold War. "Democracy was both an end and a means," asserts Ikenberry.[96] Western-aligned governments, therefore, promoted increased institutional assimilation to strengthen the democratic project.[97] John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State under President Dwight Eisenhower, dubbed this approach a linchpin to safeguarding the "freedom, common heritage, and civilization of our people."[98]

The Soviet threat also forced a distinctive paradigm shift in American security policy. For the first time in its history, the United States maintained a considerable, permanent, peacetime military establishment in Europe.[99] The world was now decidedly separated into American and Soviet spheres of influence, marking a transition into what Tony Smith classifies as "liberal internationalist hegemonism."[100] In this phase, liberal internationalism became contingent upon the sustainment of American dominance within the sphere of global, market-based

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[95] Ikenberry, *After Victory,* 213. For additional discussion of FDR's "realist" additions to Wilsonian internationalism, see Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America during World War II,* (New York, Atheneum, 1967), and Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995 ed.).

[96] Ikenberry, *After Victory,* 213.

[97] Ikenberry, *After Victory,* 213.

[98] "Statement of the Secretary of State to the North Atlantic Council, *Foreign Relations of the United States,* 1952-1954, Vol. 5, 461.

[99] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* 355.

[100] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 68.

democracies.[101] Paul Kennedy suggests that America's global, Cold War commitments—reflected in both military and economic terms, i.e. the Marshall Plan, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, etc., consigned Washington to a "degree of global overstretch totally at variance with its own earlier history."[102]

The new American order carried with it a historical continuity traceable to earlier philosophical foundations of manifest destiny. "American experience," rejoiced Henry Luce of *Life* magazine, "is the key to the future . . . America must be the elder brother of nations in the brotherhood of man."[103] While the new order marked a far cry from Thomas Jefferson's dream of a "world community of democracies," Americans saw an historic opportunity. Paul Kennedy explains that post-war American policymakers sought to finally "put right what the former Great Powers had managed to mess up. [The world was] encouraged to emulate American ideals of self-help, entrepreneurship, free trade, and democracy."[104] Echoing Smith's "hegemonic" characterization of the new liberal order, Ikenberry notes that an important policy transition took place in the beginnings of the Cold War. "The American vision of an open, liberal order was transformed into an American-centered hegemonic order," states Ikenberry.[105] "The initial American project," he suggests, "to construct an open liberal order, gave way to a focus on rebuilding and reconstructing Europe, creating a Western-centered order. America's other project was to build alliances

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[101] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 68.
[102] Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500-2000,* (New York: Random House Publishers, 1987), 360.
[103] Quoted in Robert Dallek, "The Postwar World: Made in the USA," in S.J. Ungar (ed.), *Estrangement: America and the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 35.
[104] Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers,* 361.
[105] G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 207.

and construct a containment order. By the late 1940s, these two projects became fused."[106]

Containing Communism and the Limits of Democracy Promotion

American political and military leaders in the Cold War faced the historically unique challenge of reconciling the real possibility of thermonuclear war with containing Soviet expansion. This reality triggered shifts in thinking about the feasibility of conventional military actions as well as the plausibility of democracy promotion. On the military front, the overwhelming Soviet military presence in Europe drove American policymakers to embrace strategies of nuclear deterrence. Pioneering strategists such as Bernard Brodie helped to frame the implications of this new security environment. In 1959, Brodie cautioned, "Our rejection of preventive war has committed us to deterrent strategy, and consequently...we must be willing to pay the price to make it work...the fact that total war is definitely possible makes us revise our approach to limited war; instead of taking limitations for granted we have to recognize the possibly great difficulties in keeping war limited."[107]

On the political front, American policymakers began to appreciate the limits of democracy promotion. In containing Soviet expansion, America's commitment to democracy promotion waxed and waned according to the dictates of political expediency. If true democrats could not be found, anti-communist autocrats would suffice, often resulting paradoxically in American support to illiberal, authoritarian regimes. Washington supported Mao Zedong's China, as well as military dictatorships in Southern Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia—to name just a few—simply because they constituted a buffer against America's principal peer competitor. Tony Smith underscores

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[106] Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, 207.
[107] Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age,* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1959), x.

the challenging political dilemmas produced by the aforementioned containment strategy:

> Since the first order of business was to block a probable communist takeover, the Americans faced up to political reality. From Latin America to Turkey to China, the Americans had established their priorities: regional stability and independence were more important than democracy. But now [the Americans] found themselves in the uncomfortable position of actively supporting authoritarian regimes, and this in the name of fostering a liberal democratic world order. The irony and contradiction were not lost on the internal debate within the United States.[108]

It is paramount for analytical purposes to consider the United States' calculated decision to support *regional stability over democracy.* Subsequent chapters will investigate this phenomenon in greater depth; in a Cold War context, however, such pragmatism reflected American policymakers' cognizance regarding the limits of democracy promotion.

Still, it must be noted that several Cold War-era presidents appropriated the mantle of democracy promotion towards the pursuit of varying policy objectives. While the broader narrative of democratic governance versus communism served both Republican and Democratic administrations well, individual policy priorities ultimately triumphed. For example, President Dwight Eisenhower (1953-1961) chastised the Soviet Union for holding nations in the East bloc "prisoner." Eisenhower issued a joint declaration designating the third week in July 1959 "Captive Nations Week," recognizing the struggles of subjugated peoples ranging from Poland and Armenia to North Vietnam.[109] By highlighting

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[108] Smith, *America's Mission,* 139.

[109] Captive Nations Week, S.J. Resolution 111, Pub. L. 86-90, Stat. 73-1-2, 212, July 17, 1959. Since Eisenhower's original 1959 declaration, subsequent presidents have maintained "Captive Nations Week" and molded the observance to reflect specific political objectives. For example, in 2002, President George W. Bush invoked the tyranny of governments in North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Burma, Belarus, Cuba, and Zimbabwe in his Captive Nations Week proclamation. In 2011, President Barack Obama declared, "During Captive Nations Week, we remember the men and women throughout the world still suffering under oppressive regimes, and we underscore our

the democratic deficit in Soviet zones, Eisenhower sought to expose the disparity between the American and Soviet models of self-determination. At the same time, reflecting the paradox of containment, Eisenhower empowered the Central Intelligence Agency to depose legitimate governments in both Iran (1953) and Guatemala (1954).[110]

President John F. Kennedy's (1961-1963) short-lived tenure in the White House showcased the Alliance for Progress, an initiative to promote democracy through economic development in Latin America. Kennedy's plan aimed to counter Cuban President Fidel Castro's revolutionary message in the region while redefining the image of the United States to Latin America.[111] Then Deputy National Security Advisor W.W. Rostow stated in a policy memo, "[the plan] possesses enormous power to capture the public imagination."[112] According to Michael Latham, the Alliance for Progress would "[construct] an identity for the United States as an altruistic, anticolonial nation possessing the toughness of will…to lead an economically and culturally impoverished region towards progress."[113]   In the end, however, the actual alliance materialized only between external elites and local power brokers—the administration's democratization attempt simply reinforced the same

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commitment to advancing freedom's cause. This week, we rededicate ourselves to promoting democratic values, economic development, and respect for human dignity, and we express our solidarity with freedom seeking people everywhere whose future reflects our greatest hope for peace." See George W. Bush, "Proclamation 7577 - Captive Nations Week, 2002," July 17, 2002, Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=61871; Barack H. Obama, Captive Nations Week, 2011, July 15, 2011, Proclamation 8692, 125 Stat. 2047, United States Government Publishing Office.

[110] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 71.

[111] Michael E. Latham, "Ideology, Social Science, and Destiny: Modernization and the Kennedy-Era Alliance for Progress," *Diplomatic History* 22.2 (1998): 199-229.

[112] Quoted in Michael E. Latham, "Ideology, Social Science, and Destiny: Modernization and the Kennedy-Era Alliance for Progress," *Diplomatic History* 22.2 (1998): 199-229.

[113] Latham, "Ideology, Social Science, and Destiny: Modernization and the Kennedy-Era Alliance for Progress," 208. See also Task Force Report, 4 January 1961, Papers of Teodoro Moscoso, box 9, "Report of the Task Force on Immediate Latin American Problems, Winter, 1960, John F. Kennedy Library.

oppressive establishments it sought to reform.[114]

Still, other Cold War administrations did not prioritize democracy promotion as a central theme of their foreign policy. Lyndon Johnson (1963-1969), Richard Nixon (1969-1974), and Gerald Ford (1974-77) were not particularly strong advocates of human rights and democratic governance in terms of *foreign policy* formulation.[115] Although President Nixon's administration participated in the Helsinki Conference—designed with liberal underpinnings to initiate Western/Soviet dialogue on confidence-building measures in Eastern Europe—then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger dismissed the initiative as "unpromising."[116]

Dissenting voices did, however, sound the alarm against perceived illiberal approaches to United States foreign policy. President Nixon's doctrine of détente with the Soviet Union came under fire in a 1974 bi-partisan congressional report regarding the international safeguarding of human rights. In an appeal for U.S. leadership, the House Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements lamented:

> Unfortunately, the prevailing attitude has led the United States into embracing governments which practice torture and unabashedly violate almost every human rights guarantee pronounced by the world community. Through foreign aid and occasional intervention—both covert and overt—the United States supports those governments. Our relations with the present governments of South Vietnam, Spain, Portugal, the Soviet Union, Brazil, Indonesia, Greece, the Philippines, and Chile exemplify how we disregarded human rights for the sake of other assumed interests.[117]

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[114] Walter LaFeber, "The Alliances in Retrospect," in *Bordering on Trouble: Resources and Politics in Latin America,* ed. Andrew Maguire and Janet Welsh Brown (Bethesda, MD, Adler and Adler, 1986), 337-388.

[115] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 70.

[116] U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, Milestones 1969-1976, Helsinki Final Act 1975, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/helsinki; See also Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[117] House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements, *Human Rights and the World Community:*

When President Jimmy Carter took office in 1977, the defense of human rights would comprise a central component of American foreign policy. Carter came to office in the wake of the Watergate scandal, poised to translate his electoral mandate into a moralistic brand of foreign policy.[118] Early in his presidency, Carter declared, "towards regimes which persist in wholesale violations of human rights we will not hesitate to convey our outrage nor will we pretend that our relations are unaffected."[119] In forging such an idealistic approach to diplomacy, Carter soon faced political realities that contradicted his thinking. Biographer Robert Strong argues that Carter "tried to deal with human rights in a serious fashion without abandoning other foreign policy goals."[120] In the end, Carter's embracing of an unqualified approach to human rights while simultaneously cooperating with autocratic regimes led to incongruous policy outcomes. Michael Kramer, writing for *New York Magazine* in 1980, aptly summarizes the Carter administration's attempt to lead a "crusade" for human rights:

> [The Soviets] had already seen the president waffle and
> then back down in a bloodless contest—the Great
> Human Rights Crusade. Secretary Vance asked
> Congress to cut aid to Argentina, Ethiopia, and
> Uruguay because of their human rights violations, but
> urged continued assistance to other violators, such as
> South Korea, because 'in each case we must balance a
> political concern for human rights against economic or
> security goals.' Which is how it should have been, but
> Vance's enunciation of a flexible policy undercut the

A Call for U.S. Leadership—Report, March 27, 1974 (Washington: DC, Government Printing Office, 1974).

[118] Frank Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy since 1900* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 248.

[119] Quoted in Michael Stohl, David Carleton, Steven E. Johnson, "Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Assistance from Nixon to Carter," *Journal of Peace Research,* 21 (September 1984): 222.

[120] Robert Strong, *Working in the World: Jimmy Carter and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 96-97.

president's contention that his support of Soviet dissidents was based on non-negotiable principle.[121]

Ronald Reagan, the Unanticipated Wilsonian

In his first inaugural address, Ronald Reagan announced, "We must realize that no arsenal or no weapon in the arsenals of the world is so formidable as the will and moral courage of free men and women. It is a weapon our adversaries in today's world do not have. It is a weapon that we as Americans do have."[122] Fashioning himself in the image of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Reagan brought to the presidency a decidedly optimistic message: America possessed the capacity to solve any problem on which it set its sights.[123]

A careful examination of Reagan's policy initiatives reveals a perhaps unlikely conclusion: the fortieth president emerged as more Wilsonian than even Wilson himself.[124] Stalwart conservatives and liberals alike may balk at such a characterization of Reagan; however, this assertion transcends mere political labels. Many would argue that Reagan's distrust of international organizations, the United Nations comes to mind, dispels any Wilsonian narrative. On the contrary, Reagan and Wilson both shared an apprehension about international organizations dominated by non-democratic states. Wilson initially considered restricting membership in the League of Nations to democratic states alone.[125] More importantly, Reagan believed, as did Wilson before him, that democratic self-determination was linked

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[121] Michael Kramer, "Four Years Later, It's Jimmy—Why?" *New York Magazine,* August 18, 1980.

[122] Ronald Reagan: "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1981, Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The *American Presidency Project,* http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=43130.

[123] Paul Kengor and Peter Schweizer, ed., *The Reagan Presidency: Assessing the Man and His Legacy,* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 17.

[124] Joshua Muravchik, *The Imperative of American Leadership: A Challenge to Neo-Isolationism,* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute Press, 1996), 24.

[125] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 72.

organically to American security interests.[126] Therefore, the worldwide proliferation of democracy underpinned Reagan's broader notion of security policy.

Reagan matched his rhetoric on democracy with concrete actions, some more controversial than others. The subsequent "Reagan Doctrine," as it became known, represented the most intense and costly array of covert activities attempted by the CIA.[127] In his book *The Democratic Imperative* Gregory Fossedal identified American military backing of guerilla movements during the 1980s as the "exporting of the American revolution."[128] Additionally, during the Iran-contra scandal, Oliver North admitted referring to his own irregular activities as "project democracy."[129]

Neo-conservative policy analyst Joshua Muravchik presents a slightly different assessment of Reagan's support for anti-communist guerillas. Muravchik points to democracy promotion as a positive by-product of Reagan's covert engagements vice the primary objective:

> Support for anti-Communist guerillas was less a tool for spreading democracy than for strengthening U.S. security, and a quite brilliant and useful one. By helping to even the competition by putting some of their [Soviet allies'] territory at risk, too, the Reagan Doctrine yielded not only practical benefits but psychological ones. It punctured communism's mystique of representing irreversible historical forces, as if the Red Army represented some kind of *deus ex machina.*[130]

In any case, Reagan demonstrated an unmistakable resoluteness to employ force for global causes of freedom. Where Jimmy Carter

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[126] Muravchik, *The Imperative of American Leadership,* 24.

[127] Joshua Muravchik, *Exporting Democracy: Fulfilling America's Destiny,* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute Press, 1991), 144.

[128] Gregory A. Fossedal, *The Democratic Imperative: Exporting the American Revolution,* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), chapter 7.

[129] Quoted in "The Good Project Democracy," Editorial, *The New York Times,* March 13, 1987.

[130] Muravchik, *Exporting Democracy,* 144.

equivocated on human rights, Reagan redefined entirely America's moral imperative. In the Reagan-era, anti-communism, fueled by the wave of democracy promotion, would now supplant human rights as America's most significant moral crusade.[131] Reagan's early directives issued in 1982 and 1983, respectively, framed his grand strategy—the United States would win, "not simply survive" the Cold War.[132] To achieve this vision, Reagan exploited heavily America's competitive advantages vis-à-vis Moscow, blending strategic vision with diplomatic flexibility.[133]

Reagan's exploitation of America's economic might became a cause for concern among the Soviet leadership. In July 1981, KGB Chairman Yuri Andropov expressed his unease to his East German counterpart Erich Mielke regarding the consequences of economically falling behind the United States: "The most complex problem is that we cannot avoid the strains of military expenditures for us and the other socialist countries. Reagan has confirmed that he will spend 220 billion dollars for the military. Thus, we must do it as well and provide our defense industry with corresponding means. We must not fall behind."[134] While Reagan pursued a relentless economic and military competition with the East bloc, active diplomacy was very much an element of his broader strategy. Together with his Secretary of State, George Shultz, Reagan pursued "constructive engagement" with the Soviet Union, aimed at convincing Soviet leadership that free markets and democracy could enhance the future prosperity of their people.[135]

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[131] Kengor and Schweizer, *The Reagan Presidency*, 17.

[132] Kengor and Schweizer, *The Reagan Presidency*, 16.

[133] Hal Brands, *What Good Is Grand Strategy? Power And Purpose In American Statecraft From Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush,* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 104.

[134] "Stasi Note on Meeting between Minister Mielke and KGB Chairman Andropov," July 11, 1981, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Office of the Federal Commissioner for the Stasi Records (Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Stassicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik), (BtSU), MfS, ZAIG 5382, 1-19, translated for the Cold War History Project by Bernd Schaefer, http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115717.

[135] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 73.

The coincidence of both Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev's respective leadership tenures of the two global superpowers proved fortuitous for the United States. Gorbachev recognized that the future of socialism was contingent upon reform. "The methods that were used in Czechoslovakia and Hungary now are no good; they will not work!" Gorbachev told Soviet Ambassador to the U.S. Anatoly Dobrynin.[136] Gorbachev continued, "A new society is forming, which will develop on its own foundation…the mechanisms of bi-lateral relations are becoming more complex…nothing will work out if we work within the old framework."[137] Gorbachev's reforms, *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* (combined economic and political changes, respectively) amounted, in effect, to a philosophical submission to Western liberalism.[138] Present-day examples of "reformed" communist states—China, Vietnam, Cuba—in which only economic, *not* political modifications have been enacted, suggest Gorbachev's approach was by no means inevitable. Rather, according to Stephen Padgett and William Patterson, Gorbachev was influenced by the "degree of convergence that had taken place between social democracy and liberalism."[139]

The dynamics behind the ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union and the conclusion of the Cold War are the subject of many scholarly studies, historical narratives, and political science theories. President Reagan's grand strategy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union certainly comprised *one* factor— but assuredly not the *only* one—leading to Moscow's demise. Rather, as Hal Brands articulates, "the permissiveness of the domestic and

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[136] Mikhail Gorbachev, notes, reprinted in Savranskaya, Blanton, and Zubok, editors., *Masterpieces of History,* 234-36. © National Security Archive and Central European University Press.

[137] Mikhail Gorbachev, notes, reprinted in Savranskaya, Blanton, and Zubok, editors., *Masterpieces of History,* 234-36. © National Security Archive and Central European University Press.

[138] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 73.

[139] Stephen Padgett and William E. Patterson, *A History of Social Democracy in Postwar Europe* (London: Longman Publishers, 1991), 263, in Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

international environment does much to determine what any grand strategy can accomplish."[140] Reagan, while promoting democracy, still maintained questionable partnerships with Third World autocrats and came under considerable scrutiny during the Iran-contra affair.[141] Nonetheless, Reagan's mission to spread democracy in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—his "democratic revolution"—yielded the most fruitful attempt to date in realizing Woodrow Wilson's vision.[142] In 1989, Reagan shared these thoughts:

> Once you begin a great movement, there's no telling where it will end. We meant to change a nation, and we changed a world. Countries across the globe are turning to free markets and free speech and turning away from the ideologies of the past. For them, the great rediscovery of the 1980s has been that, lo and behold, the moral way of government is the practical way of government: democracy, the profoundly good, is also the profoundly productive.[143]

The benefit of nearly thirty years of experience since Reagan's writing certainly reveals an increasingly more complex international order—one that in many ways still struggles to come to terms with itself. Few would dispute Reagan's assertion that democracy, as a means of governance, represents the "profoundly good." Yet, America's post-Cold War experience has left more questions than answers regarding democracy promotion. The following chapter will explore America's post-Cold War foreign policy and the effects of unipolarity on Washington's democracy promotion efforts. However, in concluding the historical narrative on American expansion and democracy promotion, one returns to a fundamental, yet still unanswered question: *how should America reconcile its power with its principles*?

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[140] Brands, *What Good Is Grand Strategy?,* 143.
[141] Brands, *What Good Is Grand Strategy?,* 143.
[142] Smith, *America's Mission,* 304-307.
[143] Ronald Reagan, *Speaking My Mind: Selected Speeches,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 413.

Analysis - The Clash of Idealism and Realism in U.S. Foreign Policy

Any examination of America's history with democracy promotion must come to terms with the ubiquitously mythological elements that comprise every nation's account of its own history. Most Americans view their country as an inherently altruistic, non-interventionist, "shining city upon a hill" that serves as a beacon of freedom to all peoples.[144] Viewed through a purely domestic lens, one is left with the impression that America employs military force *exclusively* as a last resort and then *only* for causes commensurate with its virtuous and noble ideals. As the previous historical narrative suggests, however, it is difficult to classify the modern _or_ historical United States as a "reluctant" power. Candidly, America's political chronology indicates expansionist instincts have been present from the beginning. In theoretical terms, such political incongruence characterizes an enduring ideological struggle within America—one between the forces of realism and idealism, the latter personified by liberalism.

Liberalism as Utopia?

E.H. Carr first grappled with the realist versus idealist question during the inter-war period. His work, *The Twenty Years Crisis,* represents an early scholarly critique of Wilsonian-inspired liberal internationalism. Carr presents two primary "methods of approach" to international politics, which he deems "utopia" and "reality."[145] "The utopian," writes Carr, is "necessarily voluntarist: he believes in the possibility of more or less radically rejecting reality, and substituting his utopia for it by an act of will."[146] On the other hand, "the realist analyses a predetermined course of development which he is powerless to

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[144] John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity," Discourse written aboard the *Arbella* during the voyage to Massachusetts, 1630.
[145] Edward Hallett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939,* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Publishers, ed. 2001), 12.
[146] Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis,* 12.

change."[147] While explicating these two poles, Carr advocates finding a proper balance between them: "all healthy human action…must establish a balance between utopia and reality, between free will and determinism."[148] Carr qualifies his admonition by arguing:

> The complete realist, unconditionally accepting the causal sequence of events, deprives himself of the possibility of changing reality. The complete utopian, by rejecting the causal sequence, deprives himself of the possibility of understanding either the reality which he is seeking to change or the processes by which it can be changed. The characteristic vice of the utopian is naivety; of the realist, sterility.[149]

Wrongly characterized by many as a staunch realist ideologue, Carr did not advocate for an exclusively "scorched earth," interest-based foreign policy. He did, however, espouse several truths regarding the international system. For good or ill, security dilemmas and inter-state competition are unavoidable realities of statecraft. Rather than ignore reality, Carr suggested the great powers account for such dynamics in their crafting of foreign policy. This also included an acknowledgement that certain countries and societies were not necessarily predisposed to democratic governance. Describing the political instability during the inter-war period, Carr asserts:

> When the theories of liberal democracy were transplanted, by a purely intellectual process, to a period and to countries whose stage of development and whose practical needs were utterly different from those of Western Europe in the nineteenth century, sterility and disillusionment were the inevitable sequel. Rationalism can create a utopia, but cannot make it real. The liberal democracies scattered throughout the world by the peace settlement of 1919 were the

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[147] Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis,* 12.
[148] Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis,* 12.
[149] Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis,* 12.

product of abstract theory, stuck no roots in the soil,
and quickly shriveled away.[150]

On the other hand, leading American neo-conservative voices refute realism's core argument that the character of states does not matter in international relations. In a more Wilsonian manner, neo-conservatives reject fundamentally the notion that domestic politics do not affect states' behavior toward other states (hence, the liberalist tradition of democratic self-determination). Joshua Muravchik delivers a scathing critique of realist assumptions: "The realist arguments...do not bear scrutiny. Do states inevitably behave as the realists describe? If states behave only as geography and human nature ordain they must, then why criticize and why prescribe?"[151] Where modern-day realists have called into question the feasibility of American democracy promotion efforts by military force, many in the idealist camp point to successful antecedents. Muravchik writes, "Look at Japan, Germany, Austria, Italy, Grenada, the Dominican Republic and Panama. They all have democratic systems imposed by American arms."[152] Such definitive statements, however, are subject to interpretation.

Mark Pecency's research presents a quantitative examination of twentieth-century U.S. military interventions to promote democracy vis-à-vis their ensuing political consequences. In *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets,* Pecency claims, "In all, the United States has attempted to implant liberal institutions in its target states during thirty-three of its ninety-three twentieth-century military interventions...at the same time, however, the United States failed to promote democracy during nearly two thirds of its interventions."[153] Subsequent chapters will explore the merits of both realist and idealist arguments, while also accounting for

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[150] Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis,* 29.
[151] Muravchik, *Exporting Democracy*, 25.
[152] Muravchik, *Exporting Democracy*, 82.
[153] Mark Peceny, *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets,* University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999, 2.

shifts in the strategic environment. Chapter 4 tests these claims by employing the theory of foreign imposed regime change in two case studies of American democracy promotion efforts in the Middle East. Despite fluctuations in the political winds since America's founding, however, military actions in the name of democracy remain a consistent source of controversy. Where Americans see "democratic revolutions," affected local populaces may see a foreign power imposing an external set of values.

If a metaperception gap still exists between how Americans see themselves and what international audiences interpret, why does it persist? One hypothesis is the misappropriation of liberal political narratives in support of American foreign policy objectives. In many instances, American politicians' depiction of the realist versus idealist debate is often at odds with reality, habitually oversimplifying conflicts and disputes as a simple matter of good versus evil. It was much easier, for example, to demonize autocrats such as Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic, Moamar Qaddafi, and Bashar al-Assad, vice explain to the electorate the intricacies of regional power politics, ethnic historiographies, border disputes, and American economic and political interests.

John Mearsheimer asserts that Americans respond positively to such unambiguous policy justifications because they are predisposed to embracing idealism. "Americans tend to be hostile to realism," Mearsheimer posits, "because it clashes with their basic values. Realism stands opposed to Americans' views of both themselves and the wider world. Liberalism, on the other hand, fits neatly with those values. Not surprisingly, foreign policy discourse in the United States often sounds as if it has been lifted right out of a Liberalism 101 lecture."[154]

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[154] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* 23.

At the same time, liberal ideals—freedom, democracy, respect for self-determination, and non-violent conflict resolution form undeniably the ideological core of American political thought. These ideals are as much embodied in Americans' sense of national identity as apple pie, ice cream, and baseball. But the manner in which such liberal ideals translate into foreign policy outcomes has never been historically uniform. Writing in the midst of the Cold War, Louis Hartz suggested that American liberalism is a complex manifestation of various "totalitarian" tendencies, ranging from "crusading liberal internationalism, excessive anticommunism, to pure isolationism."[155] Accordingly, periods characterized by foreign interventionism or spirited isolationism reflect a direct expression of how America views both itself and the outside world. Mark Pecency offers a singular perspective in that, "America either attempts to remake the world in its own image or to separate itself as completely as possible from [the] world."[156]

Can A Foreign Policy Be Both Realistic and Idealistic?

Henry Kissinger articulates perhaps most succinctly and profoundly the essence of America's struggle to come to terms with democracy promotion:

> Is American foreign policy a story with a beginning and end, in which final victories are possible? Or is it a process of managing and tempering ever-recurring challenges? Victory in the Cold War has been accompanied by congenital ambivalence. America has been searching its soul about the moral worth of its efforts to a degree for which it is difficult to find historical parallel. Either American objectives had been unfulfillable, or America did not pursue a strategy compatible with reaching these objectives. Critics will ascribe these setbacks to deficiencies, moral and intellectual, of America's leaders. Historians will probably conclude that they derived

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[155] Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution,* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955), 286.
[156] Mark Peceny, *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets,* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 26.

from the inability to resolve an ambivalence about force and diplomacy, realism and idealism, power and legitimacy, cutting across the entire society.[157]

The proper value of history lies within its multiple insights that should ultimately shape the way one views the future. What then, should policymakers deduce from America's historical narrative of expansionism and promotion of a liberal-internationalist order? Perhaps the answer lies in the balanced approach espoused by Carr nearly a hundred years ago. Realists should understand that Wilson's vision of carrying democratic governance to foreign audiences can benefit advantageously American security interests. In parallel, liberal internationalists must recognize that democratic values cannot be applied universally and without qualification. Furthermore, promoting democracy "at the point of bayonets" has yielded historically mixed results. As will be demonstrated, the local conditions, democratic traditions, and institutional stability of target states affect directly their prospects for democratization.

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[157] Kissinger, *World Order,* 279.

Chapter 3

The Dynamics of Unipolarity:
Democracy Promotion in the Post-Cold War Era

> Out of these troubled times…a new world order can emerge: a new era—freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace.
> – *President George H.W. Bush, addressing a joint session of Congress, September 11, 1990*

> I consider that the unipolar model is not only unacceptable, but impossible in today's world.
> – *Russian President Vladimir Putin, remarks at the Munich Security Conference, February 12, 2007*

Liberal Democracy's Triumph – The End of History?

On a fateful November evening in 1989, Lieutenant Colonel Harald Jäger, an East German Stasi officer, nearly choked on his dinner as he listened to the incoming news report. Jäger, commander of the border checkpoint at East Berlin's Bornholmer Straße, had just heard Politburo official Günter Schabowski announce that East German citizens with proper authorization would be allowed to cross into West Berlin.[1] Receiving conflicting guidance from his superiors, Jäger faced the most challenging moment of his life. Massive crowds overwhelmed his border crossing station, screaming "Macht das Tor auf, wir kommen wieder!" (Open the gate; we'll keep coming back!).[2] Shortly after eleven o'clock, Jäger, in a move as sweeping as history itself, ordered his men to open the border crossing. As crowds of elated East Berliners swarmed through the gate, few realized at that moment how profoundly the world would soon change. What occurred in East Germany represented only one component of the broader movement known as the Peaceful

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[1] Gerhard Haase-Hindenberg, *Der Mann, der die Mauer Öffnete: Warum Oberstleutnant Harald Jäger den Befehl Verweigerte und damit Weltgeschichte Schrieb (The Man Who Opened the Berlin Wall: Why Lieutenant Colonel Harald Jäger Refused an Order and Wrote World History),* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Publishers, 2008), 150, see also Chapter 7 in its entirety.

[2] Haase-Hindenberg, *Der Mann, der die Mauer Öffnete,* Chapter 7.

Revolutions of 1989.

By 1991 the unthinkable had occurred: the Soviet Union, one of the two great global superpowers, suddenly ceased to exist as a political entity. The dramatic collapse of what Ronald Reagan famously dubbed "the Evil Empire" caught the entire world by surprise. The implications for international order were momentous and perplexing. While politicians in both the East and West struggled to manage rapidly changing developments, scholars of international relations sought to interpret these political shifts within a broader context. Francis Fukuyama's 1989 commentary *The End of History* perhaps best embodies American sentiments of the post-Cold War era. Liberal democracy had triumphed over communism—the great contest was finally concluded. "Large-scale conflict must involve large states still caught in the grip of history," declared Fukuyama, "and they appear to be passing from the scene."[3] In Fukuyama's judgment, humanity had reached "the end of history," insofar as liberal democracy represented the ideal form of human governance. Non-democratic states still existed to be sure; but they were part of the old world, not the "post-historical" world filled with liberal democracies.

The Soviet Union's demise in 1991 catapulted the United States to the apex of global power and signaled the primacy of the liberal order. But as the populations of Eastern Europe were basking in their moment, one man in Washington approached the situation with remarkable restraint. President George H.W. Bush, in office less than a year, told his press secretary, "Marlin, I'm not going to dance on the Berlin Wall. The last thing I want to do is brag about winning the Cold War or bringing the wall down. It won't help us in Eastern Europe to be bragging about this."[4] Recognizing the sensitivities surrounding the East bloc's

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[3] Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest,* (Summer 1989).
[4] Quoted in Curt Smith, *George H.W. Bush: Character at the Core,* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2014), 144.

breakdown, Bush did not seek to exploit the Soviet government's predicament. Similarly, when it looked as if China might also succumb to a democratic revolution, Bush again responded in a cautious manner to the Tiananmen Square protests. The administration publicly condemned China's actions, temporarily halted military and diplomatic contacts with Beijing, and granted visa extensions for Chinese students at U.S. universities.[5] Bush sought to reassure the Chinese leadership, however, that America would not support the Tiananmen movement.[6] The President sent his National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft, to Beijing to assuage Chinese concerns.[7]

During his time in office, President Bush was often criticized for what he himself described as a lack of the "vision thing."[8] Quite the reverse, Bush possessed perhaps a more clairvoyant vision of world order than any post-Cold War president. While not widely recognized at the time, Bush exercised remarkable judgment with respect to democracy promotion. He recognized the need to eventually bring Russia and China into the liberal order, but did not overplay his hand. Rather, echoing Woodrow Wilson's "peace without victory" approach, Bush maintained a pragmatic view of political realities.[9] When using military force, Bush insisted on broad, international support and avoided unilateralist adventurism. His decision to allow Saddam Hussein to remain in power after the Gulf War underscores this careful approach. "Our prompt withdrawal helped cement our position with our Arab allies, who now trusted us far more than they ever had," wrote Bush. "We had come to their assistance in their time of need, asked nothing for ourselves, and

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[5] Mark J. Rozell, *The Press and the Bush Presidency,* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1996), 49.

[6] Tony Smith, *A Pact with the Devil: Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise,* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2007) 73.

[7] Rozell, *The Press and the Bush Presidency,* 50.

[8] Robert Ajemian, "Where Is The Real George Bush?" *Time Magazine,* January 26, 1987.

[9] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil*, 74.

left again when the job was done."[10]

President Bush's policies were certainly a far cry from the "blood and iron" realism of Otto von Bismarck, but he demonstrated a measured, realist streak in his cautious style of expanding and solidifying the post-Cold War order. More importantly, Bush rightly comprehended the criticality of both American leadership and legitimacy to global peace and stability. In wielding his power judiciously, Bush helped ease the transition from the Cold War to the unipolar era.

Unipolarity – Characteristics of the Post-Cold War Order

Figure 4: Status of Worldwide Democracies in 1992
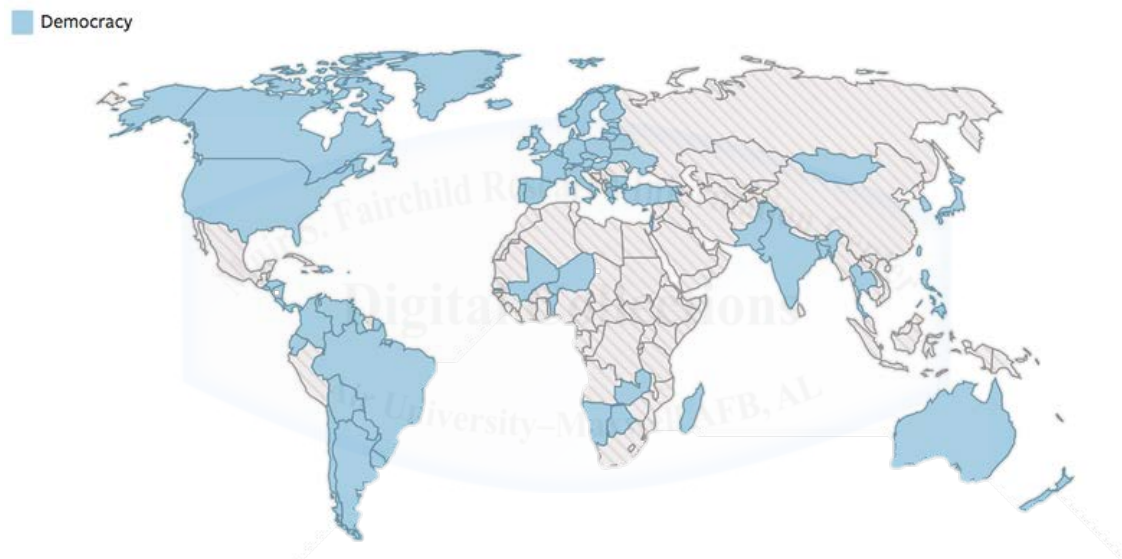
Source: Polity IV Project, Political Instability Task Force

As depicted in figure 4, international political dynamics underwent significant shifts in the early 1990s. Democracy's swift ascendancy saw liberal-inspired governments expanding across the globe by 1992. But the question to politicians and pundits of the day concerned the uncharted future of the international order. Would the failure of Soviet communism usher in a multi-polar order, similar to the status quo of the early twentieth century? Or would another peer competitor, perhaps

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[10] George H.W. Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed,* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 490.

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China, emerge as the new challenger in a transformed bipolar competition? Charles Krauthammer, writing in 1990, rejected any notions of multi-polarity or bipolarity in this new era. Krauthammer asserted, "…[the] assumptions are mistaken. The immediate post-Cold War world is not multipolar. It is unipolar. The center of world power is the unchallenged superpower, the United States, attended by its Western allies."[11]

What, then, makes a system unipolar? Ikenberry postulates that unipolarity represents a "distinctive distribution of power" unique to the post-Cold War era.[12] An international system must exhibit particular structural attributes in order to be considered unipolar: 1) Power is dramatically shifted towards a single, unitary state and away from competitors; 2) The lead state has no peer competitor(s) that can economically, militarily, and technologically challenge its position; 3) There exist no rival poles of influence capable of shifting the balance of power.[13] Indeed, in the early 1990s, the United States was the only global player to command overwhelming superiority in each of the aforementioned areas.

If, as Krauthammer asserted, the world has entered a unipolar phase, is this phenomenon truly unprecedented? Surely, ancient dominions dating back to Alexander the Great and later the Roman Empire wielded power and influence without peer on a global scale. Yet the disparity between American hegemony today, versus the ancient empires, lies in the primacy of an international system comprised of sovereign states. The modern international system of states traces its origins to the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648. The contemporary concepts of sovereignty and balance of power among states were developed from

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[11] Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 17, No. 1 (1990/1991), 23-33.
[12] G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 120.
[13] Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan,* 120.

this accord.[14] From then, until the of World War II and the bipolar era of the US and USSR, the international order has alternated between multi-polar variations up until the end of the Second World War, which saw the advent of the Cold War's bipolar arrangement.

In its present form, the world has been exposed to unipolarity for barely a quarter-century. Despite its historically brief existence, considerable theoretical exegesis regarding unipolarity now fills international relations scholarship. In examining the dynamics of unipolarity, however, two explanatory approaches are particularly enlightening. The first is Robert Gilpin's theory of hegemonic stability. Gilpin argues that the international system functions based on structures fashioned by states to advance their interests.[15] If great powers cannot maintain their interests through the existing order, the result is likely to be a hegemonic war followed by a dramatic redistribution of power.[16] From 1989-1991, however, a historical anomaly occurred—in violent contrast to Gilpin's central proposition, no hegemonic war accompanied the dramatic shift in the international order.

The second theoretical approach, advanced by Ikenberry, attributes this unique historical phenomenon to a single variable: the durability of the American-led liberal order. Ikenberry outlines his assertion in his *Liberal Leviathan*:

> [The end of the Cold War] was a turning point unlike...the great postwar junctions of 1815, 1919, and 1945. In this case, the old bipolar system collapsed peacefully without great power war. Moreover, the global system...led by the Untied States was not overturned. The world the United States and its allies created after World War II remained intact.

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[14] Derek Croxton, and Anuschka Tischer. *The Peace of Westphalia: A Historical Dictionary*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002).

[15] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in International Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 201.

[16] Gilpin, *War and Change in International Politics,* 201.

The Soviet bloc...collapsed and began an uneven process of integration into that order. As such, the end of the Cold War was not the beginning of a new world order but the last gasp in the completion of an old one.[17]

Ikenberry's central proposition suggests that the United States constructed the modern, liberal order by making itself the "hub" of "political and economic space" within the global system of states.[18] Weaker states submit to this order because the United States limits its power through international organizations such as the United Nations. The United States, as the dominant state, provides economic and security guarantees to maintain the order. Additional states, in a transactional relationship, acquiesce to American power in order to reap the benefits of membership in the liberal order.[19] More controversial is Ikenberry's contention that the organizational structure of the liberal order is sufficiently durable to guarantee the continuance of unipolarity even in the face of declining American power.[20]

Realist voices retort that rival states, such as Russia and China, are already mounting challenges to the liberal order. Russian actions in Ukraine, Crimea, and Georgia, for example, as well as China's aggressive claims in the South China Sea, underscore the enduring significance of balance-of-power politics. Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism attributes such phenomena to the ultimate goal of every great power: "to maximize its share of world power and eventually dominate the system."[21] According to Mearsheimer, in order to increase their power, states first must become hegemons within their respective regions—

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[17] G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 222.
[18] Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan,* 71.
[19] Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan,* 71.
[20] Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan,* 155.
[21] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2014 ed.), 363.

ensuring that no peer competitor can check their aspirations.[22] In contrast to Ikenberry's argument, Mearsheimer posits that the United States simply will not tolerate the emergence of new peer competitors; control of the liberal order represents instead a cold manifestation of America's disproportionately powerful standing. Because countries such as China, Russia, and Iran desire to become regional hegemons, they will eventually attempt to push the United States out of their corresponding regions.[23] Consistent with Mearsheimer's theory, any signs of declining American power would only embolden potential peer competitors to challenge the primacy of the American unipolar order.

Indeed, the previous theoretical interpretations emphasize the wide variance in which international relations scholars differ in their conceptualizations of unipolarity. However, as noted earlier, unipolarity itself represents but a small portion of the totality of world history. Only the further passage of time and gleaning of new data and experiences will yield a more comprehensive picture of unipolarity's core dynamics. For now, international relations scholars and policymakers alike must rely on the existing post-Cold War paradigms of unipolarity.

Unipolarity and Implications for Democracy Promotion

Many today associate the American-dominated, unipolar order with peace and stability. There is a somewhat natural logic to such a conclusion—if no other peer rivals can overpower the dominant state, conflicts should not occur (or at least not with any great frequency). [24] But unipolarity does not benefit from a historical antecedent accounting for the magnitude of American power in the international system. Does a single hegemon or pole, absent credible adversaries, really lead to a more peaceful order? William Wohlforth, a renowned neoclassical realist, suggests, "The current unipolarity is prone to peace. As the system

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[22] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 365.
[23] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 366.
[24] Certain elements of the realist school (neo-classical realism) advocate that unipolarity brings peace and stability—this is not an exclusively liberal vs. realist school argument.

leader, the United States has the means and motive to maintain key security institutions to ease local…conflicts and eliminate expensive competition among the other great powers."[25] Yet, even as the United States dominates the global order in every way, unipolarity has not decreased the use of force since 1991. In fact, the post-Cold War period of American history accounts for a disproportionate amount of American military operations. Nuno Monteiro's extensive research regarding the relationship between the use of force and the American unipole yields potent findings:

> The first two decades of the unipolar era have been anything but peaceful. U.S. forces have been deployed in four interstate wars: Kuwait in 1991, Kosovo in 1999, Afghanistan from 2001 to the present, and Iraq between 2003 and 2010. In all, the United States has been at war for thirteen of the twenty-two years since the end of the Cold War. Put another way, the first two decades of unipolarity, which make up less than 10 percent of U.S. history, account for more than 25 percent of the nation's total time at war.[26]

Since 2010, U.S. forces have participated in the Libyan campaign against pro-Qaddafi forces and are now engaged in Iraq and parts of Syria against the so-called Islamic State. These two additional military campaigns provide further evidentiary support of Monteiro's assertions. It should be noted, however, that major wars between great powers have not occurred in the unipolar era. Thus, in accordance with Monteiro's theory of unipolarity: "Although unipolarity dampens great power competition, it produces competition between the unipole and recalcitrant minor powers and, when the unipole disengages from the

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[25] William Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World", *International Security,* Vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer 1999), 7-8.

[26] Nuno P. Monteiro, "Unrest Assured: Why Unipolarity Is Not Peaceful," *International Security,* Vol. 36, No. 3 (Winter 2011/12), pp. 9–40. Furthermore, it is also noteworthy that in addition to the United States, Great Britain also took part in the aforementioned conflicts. In other words, two countries with a deep, liberal democratic tradition have been very willing to employ force in the pursuit of grand strategy.

world, among major and minor powers."[27] Perhaps the most important deduction from Monteiro's research centers on the unipole itself. The *character* of the unipole, coupled with its security strategies (e.g. offensive and defensive balancing or regional disengagement) affects profoundly the probabilities of conflict or peace.

What are the implications of unipolarity on America's democracy promotion efforts? First and foremost, the elimination of a bipolar order challenges conventional notions of legitimacy in statecraft. The actions and character of the hegemon carry far greater consequences for the international order as a whole because no other state's behavior affects so profoundly the fabric of the entire system. Thus, unilateral actions taken by the hegemon *outside* of established systemic norms (i.e. an offensive military action absent the authorization of the United Nations) result in a diminishing of the hegemon's legitimacy. In Ikenberry's view, legitimacy is an important element of maintaining the "bargain" of the liberal order.[28] Because the world is no longer separated along American or Soviet blocs, American political and military actions come under greater international scrutiny. Additionally, perceived weaknesses in the hegemon's ability to maintain both the economic and military status quo invites competitors to test the limits of the existing order.

In a bipolar construct, the dynamics of great power politics are fairly straightforward. At the risk of oversimplifying, Great Power X builds spheres of influence, concludes alliances, sanctions military actions, and pursues aggressive diplomacy in order to prevent Great Power Y from making relative power gains. Because absolute power matters far less than the relative power differential in a bipolar competition, Great Power X's actions are geared to maximize gains against Great Power Y. In this sense, American efforts to support "democratic movements" during the Cold War were often reduced to a

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[27] Monteiro, "Unrest Assured," 23.
[28] Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, 120-125.

simple selection of "tolerable" anti-communist regimes. That many of these regimes were fundamentally autocratic mattered little in the competition with the Soviet Union. This logic underpinned the Cold War doctrine of containment, as even minimal gains achieved by the Soviets were perceived as American losses on the relative power scale.

Perhaps equally important was the necessary acceptance by the rest of the world of the bipolar order. States aligned themselves with an American or Soviet sponsor in order to reap the benefits of a great power alliance. Thucydides' depiction of the Hellenic order's characteristic bipolarity was thus replicated, on a global scale, from 1945-1991. Exceptions certainly existed, India and the non-aligned movement comes to mind. But even so-called "non-aligned" states could not escape the influence of the two great superpowers within the international system.

The Democratic Peace Theory – Foundations of Liberal Imperialism

President George H.W. Bush's restraint in international politics came to an end with his stunning 1992 electoral defeat to then Arkansas Governor William J. Clinton. While Clinton emphasized multilateralism in his foreign policy, the foundations of future expansionist agendas were being formulated during his administration.[29] The 1990s represented a period during which liberal, Wilsonian ideals of democracy promotion became gradually appropriated by neo-conservative intellectuals and policymakers.[30] The results of this "marriage" of Wilsonian liberalism and neo-conservatism are exemplified in the later policy doctrines of President George W. Bush, including the 2003 Iraq invasion and subsequent "War on Terror." But elements of such "liberal imperialism"

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[29] President Clinton did not shy away from employing military force in Somalia or Kosovo, seeking to minimize the destabilizing effects of humanitarian crises in both regions. In Somalia, the United States augmented an established United Nations mission, and, in Kosovo, the United States fought under the auspices of the NATO alliance.

[30] For a more detailed overview, see Tony Smith, *A Pact with the Devil: Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise,* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2007), especially chapters 4-6.

still persist today, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter's case studies. It is necessary, however, at this juncture, to provide a brief overview of the theoretical basis for this philosophical shift.

Chapter 2 introduced the Democratic Peace Theory and its influence in American liberal philosophy. With the Soviet Union—the primary global alternative to liberal democracy—no longer a threat, American policymakers and academics began to assess the real possibilities of expanded liberal order. For example, in 1999, influential liberal political philosopher John Rawls published a forceful treatise entitled *The Law of Peoples.* Rawls sought to build upon Immanuel Kant's hypothesis of a "society of peoples," rejecting war by virtue of a preponderance of democratic states in the international system.[31] Separating the world into "enlightened" liberal states and "outlaw regimes," Rawls constructed a philosophical justification for expansion of democracy by force.[32] If outlaw regimes threatened the global peace, or their own populations—so the argument goes—a case could be made for a "liberal" intervention. Framing his vision of a "realistic utopia," Rawls makes the case that enduring peace is indeed within the grasp of the liberal order:

> The idea of a realistic utopia reconciles us to our social
> world by showing us that a reasonably just
> constitutional democracy existing as a member of a
> reasonably just Society of Peoples is possible…if a
> reasonably just Society of Peoples, whose members
> subordinate their power to reasonable aims is not
> possible, and human beings are largely amoral…one
> might ask, with Kant, whether it is worthwhile for
> human beings to live on the earth.[33]

Liberal theorists such as Rawls, postulates Tony Smith, provided the intellectual underpinnings to heretofore-unsubstantiated neo-

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[31] John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), Chapter 5.
[32] Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, Chapter 5.
[33] Rawls, *The Law of Peoples*, Chapter 5.

conservative arguments of the 1940s—namely, that totalitarian systems embodied evil and liberal democracy represented all that was good.[34] At the same time, neo-conservative voices began appropriating Kantian philosophy with notions of an even stronger American leadership role within the unipolar order. Natan Sharansky, whose book *The Case for Democracy,* profoundly influenced President George W. Bush's thinking, framed the international environment in starkly unequivocal terms:

> Now we can see why nondemocratic regimes imperil the security of the world. They stay in power by controlling their populations. This control invariably requires an increasing amount of repression. To justify this repression and maintain internal stability, eternal enemies must be manufactured. The result is that while the mechanics of democracy make democracies inherently peaceful, the mechanics of tyranny make nondemocracies inherently belligerent.[35]

Sharansky's assertions seem to fit hand in glove with the foundational principles of the democratic peace theory. One needs to look no further than several of the George W. Bush administration's policy pronouncements to establish a connection. For example, in the midst of a growing insurgency in Iraq, Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2005:

> First, we will unite the community of democracies in building an international system that is based on our shared values and the rule of law. Second, we will strengthen the community of democracies to fight threats to our common security and alleviate the hopelessness that feeds terror. And third, we will spread freedom and democracy throughout the globe.[36]

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[34] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil*, 109.

[35] Natan Sharansky with Ron Dermer, *The Case of Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Fear and Terror,* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 88.

[36] Condoleeza Rice, Statement at Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Confirmation Hearing, January 18, 2005, United States Senate Record.

Rice's reference to the "community of democracies" warrants particular mention because it represents a vestige of the Clinton Administration's multilateral engagement efforts. In 1999, Madeline Albright, then Secretary of State, attended the inaugural meeting of an organizational framework dubbed the "community of democracies.[37] This represented an international effort to establish a formal, trans-Atlantic framework through which to promote worldwide democracy.[38] Again, the criticality of the democratic peace theory to such initiatives cannot be understated. In order to secure a "democratic zone of peace," because democracies, per the theory, do not go to war against each other, more drastic measures were required to eliminate global autocratic trends. Completing the circle in 2005, President George W. Bush, during his Second Inaugural Address, uttered perhaps the most overwhelmingly Wilsonian policy initiative of any U.S. President: "So it is the policy of the United States," declared Bush, "to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."[39]

Hegemonic Character and the Misappropriation of Theory

Harold Winton, in a discourse on the utility of theory, asserts that theory is vulnerable to four primary pitfalls: "1) It becomes overly prescriptive (dogmatic); 2) It fails to adapt (ossified); 3) It is applied in inappropriate contexts; 4) It is applied in inappropriate circumstances."[40] This chapter makes frequent references to the democratic peace theory, as it is impossible to examine democracy promotion and unipolarity without citing the theory's overwhelming influence. In accordance with Winton's pitfalls of theory, is it possible for the democratic peace theory

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[37] Community of Democracies website, record of ministerial conferences, https://www.community-democracies.org/Talking-Democracy/Ministerial-Conferences.
[38] Community of Democracies website, record of ministerial conferences, https://www.community-democracies.org/Talking-Democracy/Ministerial-Conferences.
[39] George W. Bush, Second Inaugural Address, January 2005.
[40] Dr. Harold R. Winton, "On the Nature and Study of Theory," School of Advanced Air and Space Studies lecture, 16 Aug 2015.

to be applied in inappropriate contexts? Alternatively, there might be an even more fundamental problem with the democratic peace theory that Winton's typology explores—its central proposition could be invalid. Both neo-conservative and liberal advocates contend that a zone of democratic peace, forged by increased economic cooperation among liberal democracies, holds the key to perpetual peace. The democratic peace theory's emphasis focuses on the domestic character of individual states, the strength of the liberal economic order to bind states together, and the incompatibility of nondemocratic states to function as members of the liberal order. One critically significant question, however, is not examined: what role does the *character* of a hegemon play in the maintenance of the order?

Tony Smith hypothesizes that the theoretical association of democratic peace with hegemonic leadership is fundamentally flawed. "The problem for liberal theory," proclaims Smith, "is that *hegemonic leadership as a complex role is not a conceptual variable that this approach to the study of world affairs can claim as its own* (emphasis in original)."[41] He adds, "instead, such a political role in the international system falls under the explanatory variables of realism…it is realism, not liberalism, that debates why states act as they do in terms of power dispositions and underlying dynamics of human nature."[42] As history's insights suggest, military actions launched by a liberal hegemon in the name of democracy are not based on altruism. The United States has certainly been motivated by additional factors in conducting military campaigns for the purposes of regime change and democracy promotion.

It would seem, as Dr. Winton's criteria suggest, that the democratic peace theory has been misappropriated in contextual terms. In a unipolar world, the character and actions of the hegemon are central to any theoretical exegesis. Therefore, the hegemon itself may be capable

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[41] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 117.
[42] Smith, *A Pact with the Devil,* 117.

of deleterious foreign policy actions in the name of democracy that result in negative outcomes for all affected parties. In constructing a zone of democratic peace, the liberal hegemon may paradoxically instigate heightened levels of political and military instability. The case studies that follow demonstrate, via the theory of foreign imposed regime change, some of the flawed assumptions associated with an expanding liberal zone of peace.

Taken together, America's history of expansionism, inconsistencies in promoting democracy, and aggressive post-Cold War military actions only reinforce the metaperception gap between America and the world. Rather than simplifying the international system, the centralization of global power within a single unipole has created a more complicated arrangement. The real challenge, then, for American policymakers in the unipolar era is to identify *the conditions* under which U.S. interests are best served in promoting democracy.

Chapter 4

Case Study 1:
NATO's Intervention in the Libyan Civil War (Mar-Oct 2011)

When I looked at Libya, I thought, all right, we've got a small
population, six million people, we have tremendous energy
resources that had been underdeveloped, we had the international
community that is extraordinarily unified and invested in Libya's
success. I mean, this is the opposite of Iraq in every way. So by
God, if we can't succeed here, it should really make one think
about embarking on these kind of efforts.
– Derek Chollet, Former State Department,
National Security Council,
and Defense Department Official

NATO's Intervention in the Libyan Civil War

NATO's campaign to protect Libyans from Muammar Qaddafi's

forces began with considerable promise on several fronts. From a

political perspective, the unfolding situation presented the West with a

clear-cut, morally unequivocal imperative—support freedom-seeking

rebels attempting to depose a brutal dictator. In military terms, NATO

displayed uncharacteristic organizational alacrity, transitioning rapidly

from an initial coalition of NATO member states into a full alliance

operation with four non-NATO partners.[1] The quagmires of Iraq and

Afghanistan cast a wide shadow over the Libya campaign, producing a

strictly "no boots on the ground" approach. Instead, NATO would rely

heavily upon airpower to strike at Qaddafi's forces, thereby averting

another enduring Western military commitment in the Middle East.

Within just seven months, Qaddafi was dead and his regime relegated to

a footnote of history.

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[1] Karl P. Mueller, ed., *Precision and Purpose: Airpower in the Libyan Civil War,* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015), 1. The four non-NATO nations that contributed combat aircraft in the Libyan campaign were: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Sweden.

The intervention was ostensibly a major victory for both democracy promotion and liberal values. Anne Marie Slaughter opined that the campaign demonstrated it "clearly can be in the U.S. and the West's strategic interest to help social revolutions fighting for the values we espouse and proclaim."[2] Fareed Zakaria pronounced the Libya experience a strategic paradigm shift. "The old model of American leadership," wrote Zakaria, "where we took all the decisions, bore all the burdens, paid all the costs and took all the glory...has to change."[3] Airpower advocates were also quick to anoint the air campaign as a humanitarian intervention *par excellence*. "Libya comes to be held forth as a precedent for how military force might be used in the future," wrote Karl Mueller in an Air Force-sponsored account of the operation.[4]

In the initial wake of Qaddafi's demise, most media assessments also declared the Libya campaign to be a resounding success.[5] Yet today, both Libya and the broader region are arguably less stable than at any time during Qaddafi's 42-year reign. In 2012, just six months after the conflict, Human Rights Watch declared that human rights abuses in Libya's third largest city, Misrata, "appear to be so widespread and systematic that they may amount to crimes against humanity."[6] Rather than a flourishing democracy, or even a simply functioning state, Libya is now a hotbed of terrorist activity and a contested zone of expansion for the Islamic State. But how—in the wake of recent American experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan—could so many warning signs have been

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[2] Anne-Marie Slaughter, "Why the Libya Skeptics Were Proven Wrong," *Financial Times,* August 25, 2011.

[3] Fareed Zakaria, "A New Era in U.S. Foreign Policy," CNN.com, August 23, 2011.

[4] Mueller, *Precision and Purpose,* 2.

[5] Mark Landler, "For Obama, Some Vindication of Approach to War," *The New York Times,* October 20, 2011.

[6] Human Rights Watch, "Libya: Wake-Up Call to Misrata's Leaders: Torture, Killings May Amount to Crimes against Humanity" (New York: Human Rights Watch, April 8, 2012), http:// www.hrw.org/news/2012/04/08/libya-wake-call-misrata-s-leaders.

overlooked prior to the NATO campaign? What drove American and European politicians to remove a dictator who willingly abandoned his nuclear weapons program and with whom they conducted considerable commerce and even shared intelligence? More critically, why did the West's military intervention fail so disastrously to achieve its long-term political objectives? In order to answer these questions, one must return to the debate between realism and idealism in American foreign policy, weighing the political costs of regional stability versus democracy promotion.

Analytic Methodology

The first case study examines the efficacy of the Libya intervention as an extension of America's broader approach to democracy promotion abroad. Methodologically, it employs the theory of foreign imposed regime change to test the viability of Qaddafi's Libya as a model for potential democratic transition. The second case study, which examines ongoing operations in Syria, employs the aforementioned criteria to examine the probability of successful democratic transition in the event of a Western decapitation campaign against President Bashar al-Assad. As American thinking regarding Syria is heavily influenced by the experience of Libya, particular emphasis is dedicated to the Libyan case study.

Post-September 11th 2001 Syria and Libya are, for analytical purposes, considered "allies of convenience" for Washington, based on their respective governments' policies both towards radical Islam and the United States. In this light, the case studies also measure the military and political benefits of US intelligence-sharing relationships with both regimes prior to the Arab Spring uprisings and the negative effects to US interests in the wake of severed relations.

The Arab Revolts and Qaddafi's Libya

On 17 December 2010, a vegetable vendor in Tunisia burned himself alive in an act of desperation to protest the massive social injustices of dictator Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali.[7] This dramatic act sparked a tidal wave of social upheaval that reverberated across the entire Middle East. In rapid succession, Algeria, Jordan, Yemen, and Egypt succumbed to anti-establishment protests, leading to considerable uncertainty regarding regional political stability. 11 February 2011 signified the high water mark of the Arab uprisings, as long-standing Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak—a key U.S. ally—was obliged to abdicate the presidency.[8] Mubarak's ouster bolstered the broader anti-regime protests throughout the Middle East, but nowhere more pronounced than in Libya.

Anti-Qaddafi protests began in Libya's second largest city, Benghazi, but soon proliferated across much of the country. Qaddafi harbored historically deep suspicions about the loyalty of the eastern provinces; as a result, the region's development was largely neglected by the regime.[9] Perhaps validating Qaddafi's deep-rooted distrust, the eastern regions of Libya were also home to long-established Islamic extremist movements. In light of this extremist influence, a 2008 U.S. Army report warned that the eastern city of Darnah alone was responsible for facilitating more jihadis to combat US forces in Iraq than any other equivalent municipality.[10]

By mid-February, Western media outlets began reporting the purportedly heavy-handed response of Qaddafi's regime to the non-

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[7] Christopher Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview of the [Libyan] Intervention," in Karl Mueller, *Precision and Purpose: Airpower in the Libyan Civil War,* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015, 11.

[8] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 11.

[9] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 11.

[10] David D. Kirkpatrick, "Libya Democracy Clashes with Fervor for Jihad," *New York Times,* June 23, 2012, p. A1.

violent, peaceful protest elements.[11] Qaddafi's February 22 televised warning that he would "cleanse Libya house-to-house," combined with reports that his troops had been given orders to shoot the protestors, sounded alarm bells in European capitals as well as Washington, D.C.[12] As Qaddafi's forces advanced on Benghazi, fears of a massive refugee crisis

Figure 5: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1970
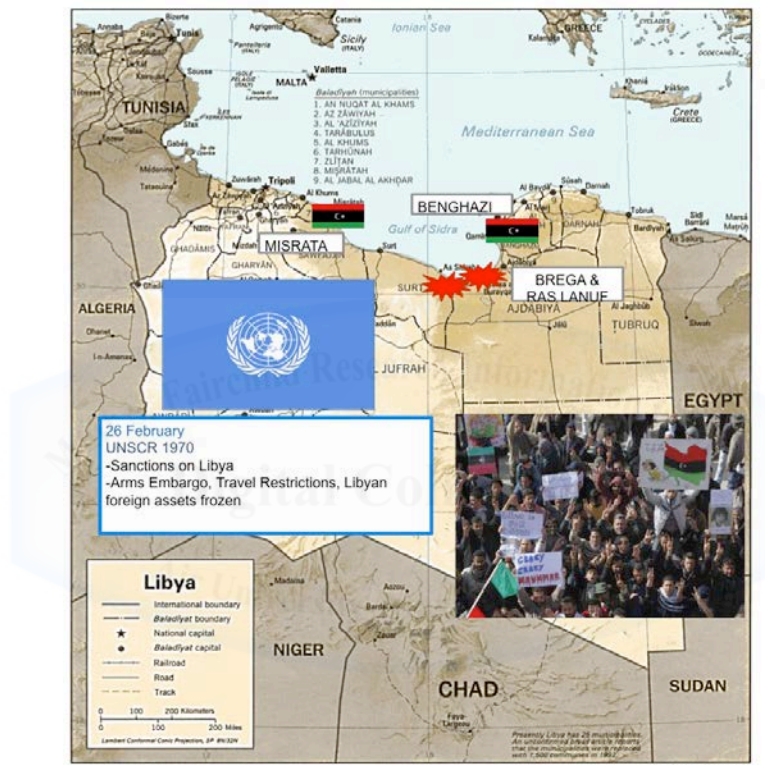
Source: Lt. Gen. Ralph J. Jodice, USAF (ret), Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR Mission Briefing/Interview with the Author, April 5, 2016

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[11] "Révoltes Arabes: Répression Brutale en Libye, à Bahreïn et au Yémen," Le Monde, February 20, 2011, p. 1; Anthony Shadid, "Clashes in Libya Worsen as Army Crushes Dissent," *New York Times,* February 18, 2011, p. A1; "Libya Jails Russia, Ukraine, Belarus 'Mercenaries,' *Agence France Press,* June 4, 2012.

[12] Kareen Fahim and David D. Kirkpatrick, "Qaddafi's Grip on the Capital Tightens as Revolt Grows," *New York Times,* February 23, 2011, p. A1. It was during this public address that Qaddafi openly made a connection between the rebels and al-Qaeda. The former Libyan dictator asserted, "what is happening now in Libya is not people's power, it's international terrorism led by al-Qaeda…there are no queues, people are getting all their daily needs. Why did you have to get involved with this kind of Bin Laden organization?" Quoted in Richard Adams, Paul Owen, David Batty, and Matthew Taylor, "Gaddafi Speech and Libya Turmoil," *The Guardian,* 24 February 2011, http://www.theguardian.com/global/blog/2011/feb/24/gaddafi-speech-libya-turmoil-live-reaction.

toward already destabilized Tunisia and Egypt precipitated a rapid Western response. On 26 February 2011, the United Nations Security Council (UNSCR) passed Resolution 1970, which was directed against the regime's financial assets; and enacted a formal arms embargo on Libya and a travel ban on senior regime figures (see figure 5).[13] French President Nicolas Sarkozy emerged as the primary advocate of military action to address the Libyan crisis, and British Prime Minister David Cameron eventually joined him. Both European leaders had political motives in calling for military intervention: Sarkozy had mishandled France's response to democratic uprisings in Tunisia and sought to rehabilitate his image in the election year.[14] Cameron aspired to an international leadership role, in part to reverse the widespread domestic repudiation of his proposed budget cuts to the British armed forces.[15]

For his part, President Obama faced the increasingly difficult position of condemning the violence but resisting calls from Congress and policy circles for military intervention. On 23 February, the President stated:

> The United States strongly supports the universal rights of the Libyan people…like all governments, the Libyan government has a responsibility to refrain from violence, to allow humanitarian assistance to reach those in need, and to respect the rights of its people. It must be held accountable for its failure to meet those responsibilities, and face the cost of continued violations of human rights.[16]

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[13] United Nations Security Council (SC), Resolution 1970, "The Situation in Libya," S/RES/1970 (2011), 26 February 2011.

[14] Natalie Nougayrède, "Recit: Comment la France a-t-elle dècidè d'intevenir en Libye?" *Le Monde,* April 19, 2011, p.12; "On ne s'improvise pas diplomate," *Le Monde,* February 23, 2011, p.7.

[15] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 14.

[16] The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Remarks by the President on Libya," Washington, D.C., February 23, 2011.

While calls for a no-fly zone intensified, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates expressed his deep concerns about proposed military actions in Libya. On 2 March, Gates detailed to a congressional committee the complexities surrounding a no-fly zone. Implementing a no-fly zone, Gates explained, meant the necessary destruction of the Libyan integrated air defense system. Such an offensive action could be interpreted as an unprovoked American attack on a Muslim nation.[17] The uncertain political situations in both Iraq and Afghanistan—particularly the lack of any coherent post-war plan for governance—also weighed heavily upon Gates.[18] Gates seemingly asked, even if the opposition could somehow overthrow Qaddafi, what guarantees did the West have that Libya's future would be more secure with a regime change?[19] More importantly, questions persisted regarding the ideological foundations of the various Libyan rebel groups. Several reports suggest the Central Intelligence Agency began positioning operatives in Libya during this period to gauge the prospects of the opposition.[20]

The National Transitional Council (NTC): Reliable Partners?

Contrary to notions of "direct democracy" espoused in the Qaddafi regime's "Green Book," Qaddafi was a textbook autocrat.[21] In 2011, shortly before the uprisings, Freedom House assessed the status of democracy in Qaddafi's Libya. The annual report, entitled, "Freedom in

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[17] Quoted in Budget Hearing—Department of Defense, Hearing of the Defense Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, March 2, 2011.

[18] Nora Bensahel et al., *After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq,* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008), MG-642-A.

[19] David E. Sanger and Thom Shanker, "Gates Warns of Risks of a No-Flight Zone," *New York Times,* March 3, 2011, p. A12.

[20] Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "CIA Agents in Libya Aid Airstrikes and Meet Rebels, *New York Times,* March 31, 2011, p. A1.

[21] The Green Book (Arabic: الأخضر باتكلا), was the Qaddafi regime's principal documentation of its political philosophy. Inspired by Mao Tse Tung's "Little Red Book," Qaddafi outlined his version of "direct democracy," in which the General People's Committee facilitated the direct political activity for Libya's citizens. Despite the numerous references to direct democracy, Qaddafi's regime controlled every aspect of the state in Libya.

the World," assigned its worst freedom rating to Libya regarding both civil liberties and political rights.[22] "Libya is not an electoral democracy," asserted the report, "political parties are illegal, corruption is pervasive, and there is no independent press."[23] Qaddafi's checkered history with the West—despite a general reconciliation with the US and Europe beginning in 1999—did not engender Western political support for his regime in 2011. In fact, Qaddafi's negative image may have contributed to Western governments' lack of scrutiny in assessing the opposition's political predilections.

By March 2011 Benghazi, the stronghold of regime opposition, became seat of the self-proclaimed "National Transition Council" (NTC), which claimed to represent the broader Libyan opposition movement. The NTC was particularly vocal in requesting immediate, Western military intervention. Most notably, the NTC entreated that Western powers enforce a no-fly zone in Libya as well as provide increased financial and military support to the opposition.[24] The devil, as the saying goes, was in the details. While the majority of disparate rebel groups agreed on overthrowing Qaddafi, there was little else to bind them together. Entities such as the Libyan Islamist Fighting Group (LIFG), linked to al-Qaeda, also comprised the active opposition in the east.[25] Accordingly, the visions of the LIFG and other "rebel" bands contrasted sharply with those seeking a democratic and free post-Qaddafi Libya.

Addressing the trustworthiness of the opposition, Lieutenant General Ralph Jodice, NATO's Air Component Commander during Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR (Mar-Oct 2011), suggested: "I don't know whether we didn't explore them [the NTC] enough…but the onus was certainly on US and Western European political leadership [to do so].

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[22] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2011," Libya 2011 Assessment, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/libya.
[23] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2011," Libya 2011 Assessment, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/libya.
[24] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 16.
[25] "L'opposition libyenne demande l'aide de l'Europe," *LeMonde.fr,* March 10, 2011.

I think on the US side, we didn't want to. We didn't want to get [more deeply] involved; that's why we didn't take a large role in the [post-conflict] transition. NATO knew that when this was over, it was up to individual nations to fix [the problem] of post-conflict Libya. The US knew where it was in Iraq and Afghanistan and the timelines associated with operations in those countries."[26] While the true extent to which the US government vetted the Libyan opposition will probably not be revealed, the record suggests many particulars went uninvestigated.

Figure 6: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973
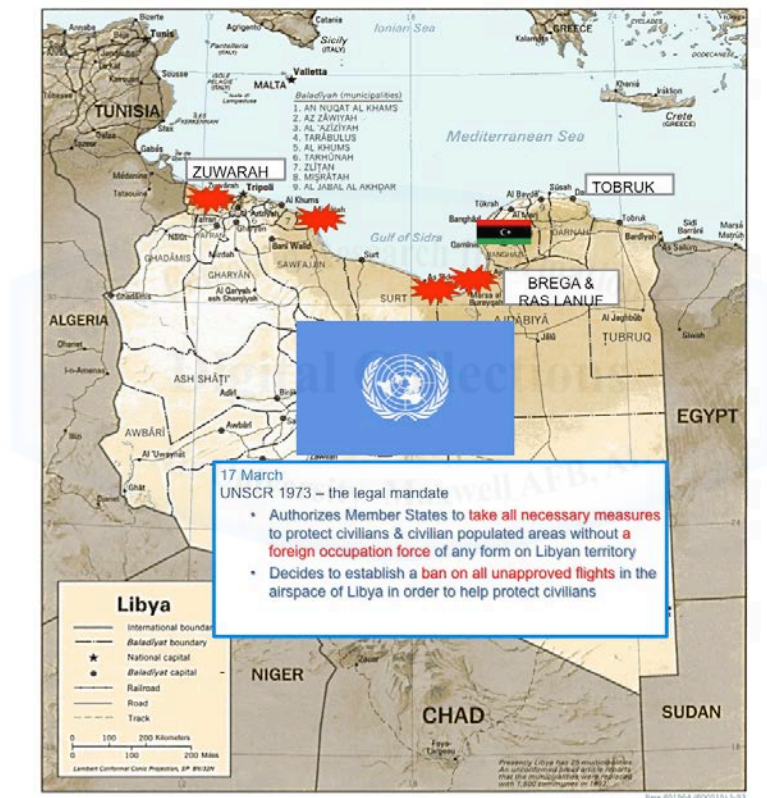
Source: Lt. Gen. Ralph J. Jodice, USAF (ret), Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR Mission Briefing/Interview with the Author, April 5, 2016

The Mandate - United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973

By early March 2011, Qaddafi's forces seemed on the verge of annihilating the rebel insurgency. Bolstered with additional mercenary forces, Qaddafi's troops advanced rapidly to the outskirts of Benghazi. Based on Qaddafi's earlier pronouncements, Western governments

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[26] Lieutenant General (ret) Ralph J. Jodice II, Interview with the author, April 5th 2016.

believed he would systematically massacre the city's inhabitants.[27] Two primary voices emerged within the US administration in support of military action: Samantha Power, President Obama's Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs (and later US Ambassador to the United Nations), and Susan Rice, US Ambassador to the United Nations. Power, whose Pulitzer-Prize winning book, *A Problem from Hell,* had lambasted America's failure to respond to genocides throughout the twentieth century, was an ardent interventionist.[28] Susan Rice, influenced by her experiences dealing with the Rwanda crisis during the Clinton administration, was determined not to repeat the same mistakes in Libya.[29]

Gauging international condemnation of Qaddafi's actions, Rice presented President Obama with an aggressive American proposal to the Security Council. Rice's draft language for a new Security Council Resolution included the verbiage that "all necessary measures" be taken to protect Libya's civilian population against regime forces.[30] Rice's forceful proposal found subsequently broad support within the Security Council. On 17 March 2011, the Security Council voted to authorize a no-fly zone and "all necessary means except occupation troops" to safeguard innocent civilians from the regime's forces (see above figure 6).[31]

It is important at this juncture place United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 within the context of the post-Cold War phenomenon of "humanitarian intervention." Dating to the early 1990s, the United Nations began sanctioning both air and ground forces to

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[27] "Battle for Libya: Key Moments," *Aljazeera.com,* August 23, 2011.
[28] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 19.
[29] Michael Hastings, "Inside Obama's War Room," *Rolling Stone,* October 27, 2011.
[30] Hastings, "Inside Obama's War Room."
[31] Alan J. Kuperman, "A Model Humanitarian Intervention? Reassessing NATO's Libya Campaign," *International Security,* Vol 38, No. 1 (Summer 2013), pp. 105-136. UNSCR 1973 passed with the support of ten of the Security Council's 15 voting members—Brazil, China, Germany, India, and Russia abstained from the vote.

protect vulnerable civilian populaces in conflict zones such as northern Iraq, Bosnia, and Somalia.[32] Questions surrounding the international legitimacy of the humanitarian intervention in NATO's 1999 Kosovo campaign resulted in the 2005 United Nations General Assembly declaration of the "responsibility to protect" (R2P) principle.[33] The R2P concept underscored states' obligations to guarantee the security of their own non-combatant citizens and the responsibility of the international community to aid in the peaceful implementation of this goal.[34]

The notion of a "responsibility to protect" on an international level corresponds particularly well with liberal, Wilsonian conceptualizations of democracy promotion. Characterizations of a "realistic utopia" in accordance with theorist John Rawls, as well as Natan Sharansky's "outlaw regimes" that imperil the security of the world, deliver theoretical justifications for the employment of military force in support of oppressed populations. Autocratic regimes that attack deliberately innocent non-combatants cede the moral high ground to democratic states, which, according to the theory, exist to expand the democratic zone of peace. But even with such a seemingly clear-cut scenario as 2011 Libya, the United States government did not signal its unconditional support for military intervention. Only a few weeks prior to the release of UNSCR 1973, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates cautioned in an address to West Point cadets, "any future defense secretary who advises the president to

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[32] Kuperman, "A Model Humanitarian Intervention?"

[33] UN General Assembly, sixtieth session, *World Summit Outcome, 2005*, resolution adopted by the General Assembly, October 24, 2005, p. 30, par. 139. See also Alan J. Kuperman, "R2P: Catchy Name for a Fading Norm," *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 2011), pp. 127–130.

[34] UN General Assembly, sixtieth session, *World Summit Outcome, 2005*, resolution adopted by the General Assembly, October 24, 2005, p. 30, par. 139. It should be noted, however, that despite the resolution, international consensus on this issue is far from universal. For example, the 1999 Kosovo campaign did not receive implicit authorization from the United Nations Security Council due to the objections of Russia and China. At the same time, the United States has inconsistently applied its hard power in the defense of vulnerable non-combatants. Where Kosovo became a priority, for example, the mass executions of hundreds of thousands (some estimates ranging into the millions) of civilians in Rwanda during the mid-1990s received a muted response from the West.

again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should have his head examined."[35] Indeed, the dilemma over Libya re-opened the debate between realism and idealism in American foreign policy.

Power and Rice ultimately won the day—in their view, Libya would demonstrate to the world that America's power supported its principles of democracy, liberty, and self-determination. That Qaddafi was an international pariah who epitomized autocratic hubris certainly aided in making the interventionists' case. More importantly, Libya would be a "smart war," in which the US would avoid the commitment associated with deploying ground troops.[36] Instead, airpower—America's "asymmetric advantage"—would project America's power while minimizing its vulnerability.[37]

Indiscriminate Killings or Inflated Narrative?

International support for military action in Libya was established largely upon the premise that Qaddafi's regime attacked innocent, unarmed protestors. The prevailing media narratives, however, ignored additional news reports that invalidated this scenario. For example, according to a 15 February 2011 BBC report, many Libyan protestors were actually armed and assaulted regime forces in Benghazi.[38] Supposedly non-violent protesters in Benghazi employed Molotov cocktails, bulldozers, and bomb-laden vehicles as a means to capture

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[35] Robert Gates, speech delivered at the United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, February 25, 2011, http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1539.

[36] Shortly after the Security Council issued Resolution 1973, President Barack Obama stated, "We are not putting any ground forces into Libya." Barack Obama, "President Obama Says the Mission in Libya Is Succeeding," weekly address, White House, March 26, 2011. After the conclusion of hostilities, he emphasized, "Without putting a single U.S. service member on the ground, we achieved our objectives." Barack Obama, "Bringing Home Our Troops," weekly address, White House, October 22, 2011.

[37] Quoted in "ISR in a Changing World," Headquarters, United States Air Force, Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Briefing, February 2009.

[38] 12. "Libya Protests: Second City Benghazi Hit by Violence," British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), February 16, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12477275.

Qaddafi's garrison in the city.[39] Protester-incited violence was also not limited exclusively to Benghazi. Several days later, in Al Bayda, "witnesses told Amnesty International that in the evening they saw police defectors shooting at Qaddafi's forces. From that point, the protests quickly escalated into violent confrontations."[40] Libya's capital, Tripoli, also saw protestors initiate offensive, destructive actions that elicited a heavy-handed government response. Eyewitnesses to the 20 February events in Tripoli remarked, "[the protestors] kicked out the pro-Qaddafi people in the Square and burned the internal security center. They entered and burned it all, and I think the general security building overlooking the martyrs' square, too...[Later], suddenly cars came, the land cruisers, with people. They were far away so I can't tell you if they were Africans or Libyans or from Sirte. They gave us no chance. Heavy fire, like it was a war."[41]

A United Nations report substantiated reports of protestor-inspired violence in Misrata on 21 February: "protests appeared to have escalated rapidly, however, with demonstrators attacking offices of the Revolutionary Committees, police stations and military barracks on 21 and 22 February 2011 and arming themselves with weapons found at these locations. The Qaddafi government admitted to firing live ammunition at those who, it said, were involved in violent actions."[42] In reexamining competing narratives during the Libyan campaign, Alan Kuperman concludes that many of the West's initial assumptions regarding the violence in Libya were predicated on inaccurate news reporting:

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[39] Kuperman, "A Model Humanitarian Intervention?"

[40] Amnesty International, *The Battle for Libya: Killings, Disappearances, and Torture* (London: Amnesty International, September 8, 2011), p. 37.

[41] "They Gave Us No Chance: Heavy Fire, Like It Was a War," *Alive in Libya*, February 20, 2011, http://alive.in/libya/2011/02/20/they-gave-us-no-chance-heavy-are-like-it-was-a-war/.

[42] UN Human Rights Council, nineteenth session, "Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Libya," A/HRC/19/68, advance unedited version, March 2, 2012, p. 53, quoted in Kuperman, "A Model Humanitarian Intervention?"

Although the [Qaddafi] government did respond forcefully to the rebels, it never targeted civilians or resorted to "indiscriminate" force, as Western media reported. Indeed, early press accounts exaggerated the death toll by a factor of ten. This error can be traced partly to the French physician in Benghazi, who extrapolated wildly from the tiny sample in his hospital. Shortly after returning home on February 21, he was quoted as estimating that "more than 2,000 deaths" had occurred in Benghazi and its surroundings during his stay. In reality, Human Rights Watch has documented only 233 deaths across all of the Libya before this doctor left the country.[43]

Data from Human Rights Watch covering the city of Misrata also contradicts media narratives that Qaddafi's forces indiscriminately attacked civilians. In March 2011, as the UN Security Council was debating implementation of a no-fly zone, Human Rights Watch reported that approximately 949 people in Misrata were wounded, of whom 22 were women and 8 children.[44] If Qaddafi's forces had attacked civilian zones without any regard for civilian casualties, there most certainly would have been a higher percentage of women and children among the wounded. But perhaps the most convincing numbers from Alan Kuperman's research surround the initial period of fighting in Misrata, from February-March 2011. During this time, Human Rights Watch reported that Misrata's hospitals recorded a total of 257 people killed—both insurgents and regime forces—in a city of over 400,000.[45] In other

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[43] Kuperman, "A Model Humanitarian Intervention?" See also Gérard Buffet, quoted in Malye, "Libye." Human Rights Watch, "Libya: Governments Should Demand End to Unlawful Killings: Death Toll Up to at Least 233 over Four Days" (New York: Human Rights Watch, February 20, 2011), http:// www.hrw.org/news/2011/02/20/libya-governments-should-demand-end-unlawful-killings.
[44] Human Rights Watch, "Libya: Government Attacks in Misrata Kill Civilians: Unlawful Strikes on Medical Clinic" (New York: Human Rights Watch, April 4, 2011), www.hrw.org/news/2011/ 04/10/libya-government-attacks-misrata-kill-civilians.
[45] Kuperman, "A Model Humanitarian Intervention?"

words, the percentage of the population killed after nearly two months of fighting in the conflict's most contested zone was less than 0.0006.[46]

What do these numbers imply? Do the aforementioned data excuse Qaddafi's regime from its responsibility to protect its citizens or justify in some aspects the government's response to the protestors? The answer must be no. The Qaddafi regime's human rights record, however, had been well known for over 40 years, yet the United States government did not hesitate to re-open its embassy in Tripoli in 2006. At issue is that Security Council Resolution 1973 was predicated fundamentally upon the assumption that indiscriminate killings of civilians were taking place. If the Libyan government did not perpetrate such actions, the legitimacy of the resolution comes into question. Furthermore, the above examples should serve as a cautionary note to future US policymakers regarding assertions made by rebel or opposition movements. It is only logical that Libyan opposition elements would exaggerate casualties and attempt to portray a "David vs. Goliath" struggle in their efforts to secure Western military support. Ultimately, the liberal-inspired doctrine of "responsibility to protect," bolstered by a very public demonization of Qaddafi's regime, may have distorted Western perceptions of the situation on the ground.

From Operation ODYSSEY DAWN to UNIFIED PROTECTOR

Shortly after UNSCR 1973's authorization, a loose coalition of countries rushed to enforce its implementation. Desiring to demonstrate France's leadership role, President Nicolas Sarkozy announced on 19 March that French combat aircraft had bombed Qaddafi's forces on the outskirts of Benghazi.[47] By 25 March, the United States, United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway,

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[46] Kuperman, "A Model Humanitarian Intervention?"
[47] Radio France Internationale (Paris), "French Fighter Jets Fly over Country," March 19, 2011.

Spain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates had joined the operation.[48] Despite the broad array of international participation, the United States generated the vast propensity of combat sorties.[49] The combined military forces were soon amalgamated into Joint Task Force Odyssey Dawn, established under the auspices of United States Africa Command.[50] By late March 2011, Odyssey Dawn had prevented Qaddafi's forces from progressing towards Benghazi and enabled the beleaguered rebels to regroup and counterattack westward.[51] But as Western forces began serving essentially as the "rebel air force," questions emerged surrounding the campaign's eventual end-state. Gideon Rose commented in the *Washington Post,* "The administration has launched the United States into battle with no clear vision of what a successful and stable outcome looks like."[52]

NATO Takes Over – UNIFIED PROTECTOR

After initial disagreements within the alliance over optimal command structures, the United States proposed a formal transition to bona fide NATO command in late March 2011. In doing so, Washington sought to build on NATO's existing relationships with partner nations ranging from Europe to the Middle East, as well as the organization's fixed command-and-control architecture.[53] NATO's new command, now implementing Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR (OUP), transferred air operations from the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, to the CAOC at Poggio Renatico, Italy. NATO's new air component commander, Lieutenant General Ralph Jodice, faced the daunting task of assuming combat command while simultaneously ensuring his nascent headquarters infrastructure was properly staffed

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[48] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 19.
[49] OASD (PA), "DoD News Briefing with Vice Adm. Gortney," March 28, 2011.
[50] Joe Quartararo, Michael Rovenolt, and Randy White, "Libya's Operation Odyssey Dawn," *Prism,* Vol. 3, No. 2, March 2012, pp. 141-156.
[51] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 19.
[52] Gideon Rose, "Tell Me How This Ends," *Washington Post,* March 27, 2011, p. B1.
[53] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 19.

and resourced. Hundreds of staff from European Command rushed to augment the new CAOC at Poggio Renatico, which had not previously engaged in combat operations of this magnitude in its history.[54] NATO's command structure required that all major decisions receive approval by the 28 members of the alliance, regardless of their participation in combat operations.[55] In reality, however, the eight members participating in active combat operations under the civilian protection mission—the United States, France, Britain, Canada, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, and Italy—coordinated on major decisions before bringing them to the full group.[56]

Jodice's selection as air component commander would prove fortuitous. Aside from an extensive operational career in fighter aircraft, Jodice also served as US Defense Attaché in Beijing and as Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for International Affairs, positions that prepared him well for leading a diverse coalition of over 28 partner nations.[57] Nonetheless, the totality of Jodice's international experience could not substitute for the often conflicting, or nonexistent, political guidance regarding the intervention's strategic goals. Prior to the passage of UNSCR 1973, President Obama, as well as Nicolas Sarkozy and David Cameron, had called openly for Qaddafi's removal. "And so let me just be very unambiguous about this," declared Obama on March 4, "Colonel Gaddafi needs to step down from power and leave. That is good for his country. It is good for his people. It's the right thing to do."[58] At the same time, NATO's military operations were exclusively limited to protecting the civilian population.

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[54] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 29.
[55] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 28.
[56] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 28.
[57] United States Air Force, Official Biographies, Lieutenant General Ralph J. Jodice II, http://www.af.mil/AboutUs/Biographies/Display/tabid/225/Article/105053/lieutenant-general-ralph-j-jodice-ii.aspx.
[58] Massimo Calabresi, "Obama Refines Talk of Libya Intervention," *Time Magazine,* March 4, 2011, http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2057191,00.html.

The inconsistencies in America's political narrative exacerbated existing challenges faced by the NATO staff in matching tactical air effects to ambiguous political guidance. "I can say with 100 percent certainty that regime change was never the case [regarding NATO's core mission]," stated Lieutenant General Jodice.[59] "Nobody ever whispered in my ear that, you know, 'we really want to take out Qaddafi.' Some [individual] nations were saying that, but this was never going to be an official position for the Alliance."[60]

The April 14 NATO Foreign Ministers' Berlin Meeting did result in additional clarifications regarding the validity of potential Qaddafi-regime targets. Specifically, language emerged from the ministerial meeting affirming that a key objective of NATO's operation was to ensure "attacks and threats of attacks against civilian-populated areas have ended."[61] This implied that Qaddafi's forces were valid military targets virtually anywhere in Libya—as long as a credible, military threat existed that could harm the civilian population.[62] As such, NATO forces struck directly at Qaddafi's supply lines, command and control facilities, and infrastructure in addition to the Libyan fielded forces.[63]

While NATO's targeting methodology may have reduced the regime's ability to wage war, both the intensity of the air campaign and the nature of the targets raise questions about NATO's actual desired outcome. Alan Kuperman, in his article, *A Model Intervention?* suggests NATO's military actions were more consistent with a regime change strategy, rather than representing a strictly civilian protection mission. For example, Kuperman questions NATO's rationale for bombing

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[59] Lieutenant General (ret) Ralph J. Jodice II, Interview with the author, April 5th 2016.
[60] Lieutenant General (ret) Ralph J. Jodice II, Interview with the author, April 5th 2016.
[61] NATO Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR Mission Briefing, courtesy of Lieutenant General (ret) Ralph J. Jodice.
[62] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 30. Derived from interviews with NATO officials, February 7, 2011.
[63] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 30. Derived from interviews with NATO officials, February 7, 2011.

Qaddafi's hometown of Sirte early in the campaign, as there was no threat to civilians in that loyalist city.[64] The *New York Times* subsequently reported that Libyan government officials complained, "Western powers were now attacking the Libyan Army in retreat, a far cry from the United Nations mandate to establish a no-fly zone to protect civilians. Libyan forces were attacked as they were clearly moving westbound."[65]

Additionally, if NATO operations were limited to protecting civilians against regime forces, why were no ceasefire initiatives considered by the Alliance? Kuperman argues that instead of mitigating civilian casualties, the NATO intervention "extended the war and magnified harm to civilians, contrary to the intent of the UN authorization."[66] For example, on 3 March, Qaddafi signaled his intent to discuss Venezuela's offer to negotiate an end to hostilities; however, the NTC completely "rejected the concept of talks."[67] Qaddafi accepted the African Union's April 11 proposal for an "immediate ceasefire to be followed by a national dialogue," but the rebels would not negotiate until Qaddafi was out of power.[68] On 26 May, in the midst of a stalemate, Qaddafi offered both an immediate ceasefire as well as peace talks geared toward the development of an eventual constitutional government.[69] The rebels again categorically rejected Qaddafi's offer of truce. While it is impossible

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[64] Praveen Swami, Rosa Prince, and Toby Harnden, "Coalition Forces Strike Sirte; Leader's Home Town," *Daily Telegraph*, March 28, 2011 in Kuperman, "A Model Intervention?"

[65] David D. Kirkpatrick and Kareem Fahim, "Libyan Rebels March toward Qaddafi Stronghold," *New York Times*, March 28, 2011.

[66] Kuperman, "A Model Intervention?"

[67] "Gaddafi Accepts Chavez Talks Offer," Al Jazeera, March 3, 2011, http://www.aljazeera.com/ news/africa/2011/03/20113365739369754.html.

[68] Peter Kenyon, "Libyan Rebels Reject AU Cease-Fire Plan," National Public Radio, April 11, 2011, http://www.npr.org/2011/04/11/135324882/libyan-rebels-reject-au-ceaseare-plan.

[69] Martin Chulov, "Libyan Regime Makes Peace Offer That Sidelines Gaddafi," *Guardian*, May 26, 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/may/26/libyan-ceaseare-offer-sidelines-gaddafi.

to determine if Qaddafi would have actually abided by any truce with the rebels, no legitimate attempts to negotiate peace materialized.

From NATO's perspective, Lieutenant General Jodice remarked, "there were never any discussions about post-conflict planning or what happens after Qaddafi. The belief was that the NTC would be capable of transitioning to a relatively stable government. At the same time, in August/September, and I pick this timeline because that's when things started to turn in the rebels' favor . . . there was never any [NATO planning] discussion about, 'do we implement a moratorium on airstrikes?' or 'should we perhaps halt operations to enable a ceasefire and see what happens'? There were simply no discussions of that nature in the planning. And it's hard to tell what might have happened if we had implemented [such actions]."[70]

The Final Push: Qaddafi's Demise and the Termination of SCR 1973

As the air campaign continued throughout the summer, the tide of the war slowly began to turn in the rebels' favor. The relief of Misrata—the only city in western Libya held by the rebels—began a chain of events that transformed the trajectory of the conflict. By August, the rebels had opened up a veritable "Western front" that posed a serious threat to Tripoli.[71] On 20 August 2011, rebel forces entered the capital, thus ending, for all intents and purposes, Qaddafi's 42-year rule over Libya. Just two months later, on 20 October, Qaddafi and several remaining loyalists struggled to escape the siege of Sirte, Qaddafi's hometown, in a large convoy. NATO aircraft halted the convoy's advance and Qaddafi attempted to flee by hiding in a drainpipe. Rebel forces quickly discovered Qaddafi's hiding place—after which they tortured, paraded, and subsequently executed the former strongman. On 31 October, UNSCR 1973 was terminated and with it NATO's Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR. Libya was, so it seemed, now in the hands of its own

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[70] Lieutenant General (ret) Ralph J. Jodice II, Interview with the author, April 5th 2016.
[71] Chivvis, "Strategic and Political Overview," of the [Libyan] Intervention, 39.

people. Upon the conclusion of the intervention, US Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice declared, "for the United States, I think, [and] for the United Nations Security Council, this closes what I think history will judge to be a proud chapter in the Security Council's history."[72]

After Qaddafi – The Price of Regime Change

In January 2016, five years after Susan Rice's pronouncement, the United Nations Security Council released its monthly forecast regarding political developments in Libya. The key discussion points describe a country teetering on the edge of chaos, fighting to prevent a hostile takeover from the Islamic State terror organization. The report begins: "2.4 million people, of whom 435,000 are estimated to be internally displaced, are in need of humanitarian assistance, in addition to several hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants. The security situation continues to be critical, particularly in Benghazi. United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has repeatedly condemned the indiscriminate shelling of residential areas there by all parties. The increasing presence of terrorist groups continues to be a threat to Libya and the region. Mobilizing international support to assist Libyan authorities to take decisive measures to combat, contain, and eliminate the imminent danger of ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) is a must."[73] While Qaddafi's Libya may have been a far cry from a Jeffersonian democracy, it was decidedly not the failed state of 2016.

US Security Interests, Intelligence Sharing, and Qaddafi's Regime

This work endeavors to determine if there are cases in which the United States should make interest-based exceptions to cooperating with autocratic regimes rather than by default supporting democratic movements. The Libyan intervention presents perhaps the most apt

[72] Susan Rice, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Interview with CNN, "NATO Ends Libya Mission," November 3, 2011, http://www.cnn.com/2011/10/31/world/africa/libya-nato-mission/.

[73] United Nations Security Council, *Security Council Report,* December 23, 2015, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/2016_01_forecast.pdf.

post-Cold War scenario with which to examine this issue. Considerable research abounds exploring the historical nuances of Libya's complicated relationship with the West since Qaddafi's rise. In analyzing American security interests in Libya, however, this case study emphasizes the robust alliance of convenience in the realm of intelligence sharing that emerged between Tripoli and Washington from 2004 through 2011.

The Criticality of Post 9/11 Intelligence Sharing Efforts

In the age of radical Islamic terrorism, the cross-border exchange of intelligence has become a fundamental tool in the establishment and preservation of security and stability. The extent to which states share intelligence with each other is based on perceived mutual interests, which can create the by-products of increased levels of trust and closer cooperation. Furthermore, the rapid dissemination of operational and tactical intelligence today has noticeably changed policy-makers' decision calculuses elevating the value placed on "actionable" intelligence as currency in the international game of statecraft. The dynamic nature of today's threats requires the United States to look beyond its traditional, Western-based alliances to develop a silent set of linkages that facilitate a worldwide anti-terror watch and fight. Cultivating such relationships with foreign liaisons outside of the public eye is paramount to obtaining timely, useful operational and tactical intelligence data.

Historical experience has certain patterns. For example, the United States found itself in the difficult position of dealing with repressive, dictatorial, and ideologically reprehensible regimes in its opposition to the Soviet Union, e.g., Mao Zedong's China, military dictatorships in Spain, Greece, Latin America and elsewhere. Nonetheless, the United States supported many of these regimes simply because they provided a buffer against its primary peer competitor of the day. Less than a quarter century later, the United States finds itself again relying on questionable regimes in order to sustain a global intelligence network, this time to combat radical Islamic terrorism.

In a modern security environment, sound intelligence analysis is the undisputed first line of defense against terrorism. It can direct law-enforcement activities, focus/refine covert action, and define the size and scope of US military operations. The globalization of the international struggle against Islamic extremism serves to enhance indication and warning capabilities by uniting a multi-national network of intelligence agencies.[74] Accordingly, the US government has advocated expanding its network of collaborative intelligence exchanges. In October 2005, then Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte called publicly for the US intelligence community to "establish new and strengthen existing intelligence relationships."[75]

Why Share Intelligence?

Today the United States possesses a robust technical intelligence collection network, bolstered by space-based satellite systems. This architecture is supported correspondingly by an annual budget unequaled by any peer competitor. In 2010 alone, the United States spent approximately $80.1 billion on intelligence programs, equal to roughly 12% of the Pentagon's then $664 billion defense budget.[76] The superior technological collection capabilities possessed by the US are essential to facilitating transactional relationships with foreign intelligence services eager to "trade" for information.

Despite clear advantages in technology and funding, however, no country's intelligence architecture dominates every intelligence discipline. The United States must still rely on foreign intelligence services for human intelligence (HUMINT) sources and data to fill gaps in

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[74] James I. Walsh, *The International Politics of Intelligence Sharing,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

[75] Derek S. Reveron, "Old Allies, New Friends: Intelligence-Sharing in the War on Terror," *Orbis,* 50, no. 3, (2006): 455.

[76] Ken Dilanian, "Overall US Intelligence Budget Tops $80 Billion" *Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 2010. Additionally, FY 2010 was significant as it represented the first instance in which the budget figure for the entire Intelligence Community was declassified.

its own intelligence collection requirements. Shortfalls in HUMINT are attributed to the US intelligence community's scarcity of linguists, cultural/regional experts, and network of agents on the ground that can effectively penetrate groups such as al-Qaida and its associates. This does not suggest that the quality of US-produced HUMINT data is poor, but serves to illustrate a point: even *within* the United States, the FBI has encountered operational setbacks in successfully infiltrating English-speaking, urban eco-terrorist groups.[77] Intelligence operations to penetrate an Arabic-speaking tribal group in complicated regions such as the Middle East pose exponentially greater challenges.[78]

Faced with these realities, the United States intelligence community has engaged in increasingly expanded cooperation with foreign liaisons in an effort to improve access to sources, minimize costs, and reduce the immense requirements to penetrate successfully complex, Islamic terrorist organizations.[79] Exploiting foreign intelligence services' indigenous collection capabilities in difficult regions such as the Middle East and Southwest Asia gives the US access to partner countries' established intelligence networks without forcing the United States to unilaterally pursue Islamic extremist groups.

Hierarchical Intelligence Sharing Relationships

One might infer that trust is a necessary prerequisite in the facilitation of a complex network of intelligence sharing between international actors. While the association of mutual trust to facilitate intelligence sharing is important, it is equally prudent not to overestimate its value. Countries may still enter into intelligence sharing agreements absent this element. The United States continued to share intelligence with West Germany in the 1950s, despite anxieties about former associations of senior leaders of the German intelligence service

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[77] Reveron, "Old Allies, New Friends: Intelligence-Sharing in the War on Terror."
[78] Reveron, "Old Allies, New Friends: Intelligence-Sharing in the War on Terror."
[79] H. Bradford Westerfield, "America and the World of Intelligence Liaison," *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 11, No.3, (July 1996).

(BND) with the Nazi party, or reporting that Soviet agents had penetrated the BND.[80] In the same respect, the United States maintained a robust intelligence sharing relationship with South Vietnam during the late 1960s and early 1970s, even as American officials feared their war plans would be leaked to the Communists.[81]

States mitigate this trust deficit by substituting a hierarchical relationship, in which one state exerts some influence over another state's intelligence activities, for trust.[82] Hierarchical agreements to share intelligence tend to formalize this quid-pro-quo by allowing one partner to play a leading role and to assume responsibility for the oversight of implementation.[83] These arrangements also provide "subordinate" states rewards and rewards in the form of shared intelligence, financial aid, and protection from external threats in return for responding to the client state's requirements.[84]

Subordinate states accept their status in a hierarchical relationship because doing so guarantees cooperation with the contracting state, in this case, the United States. However, contracting states must also invest significantly in monitoring the actions of the responding states and in many cases must pay for associated training and equipment. For example, it has been reported that the US government has directly funded both the Egyptian and Jordanian intelligence services, with which it has shared hierarchical relationships.[85] The costs of defection from an intelligence-sharing relationship between subordinate states and the United States are high, primarily due to widespread corruption within their respective

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[80] Westerfield, "America and the World of Intelligence Liaison."

[81] Walsh, *The International Politics of Intelligence Sharing.*

[82] Walsh, *The International Politics of Intelligence Sharing.*

[83] Walsh, *The International Politics of Intelligence Sharing.*

[84] Walsh, *The International Politics of Intelligence Sharing.*

[85] Jeremy Sharp, "Jordan: Background and US Relations," Congressional Research Service Report, March 6, 2008. See also Gary Strauss, "Suleiman's Reputation Holds Dread for Many in Egypt," *USA Today*, 11 Feb 2011.

governments and the tacit support they may harbor for radical Islamic terror groups. However, much like a risky investment in the financial sector, the potential joint gains from intelligence sharing are also high. The United States, as the contracting state, has exploited these partner intelligence services' use of brutal interrogation techniques to elicit information from detainees. This was of particular importance to the previous US practice of "extraordinary rendition" of suspected terrorists for interrogations.[86]

Today the political situation in countries such as Pakistan, Egypt, and Jordan, which are key interlocutors in prosecuting radical Islamic groups, allows them to arrange a hierarchical relationship with the United States that benefits both parties. While there are elements in subordinate states that sympathize with Islamic extremists, or simply resist cooperation with the United States, the respective governments of these countries do not necessarily share the same views.[87] Thus, hierarchy presents an additional "security blanket" with which governments can overcome concerns about partner-state deviation from intelligence agreements.

An Anti-Jihadist Partner in Tripoli

As early as 1998, Qaddafi's regime was showing signs of a nascent rapprochement with the United States. The former Libyan leader does not normally receive credit for issuing the first ever notification to Interpol calling for the capture of Osama Bin Laden after the US Embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya.[88] In the wake of the 11

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[86] James I. Walsh, "Intelligence Sharing and US Counterterrorism Policy," in *Security Governance: A Statist-Transnationalist Approach,* ed. Ersel Aydinli. (New York: Routledge Publishing, 2010). There are varying opinions in the national security community both in support of and against "enhanced methods of interrogation" and the efficacy of implementing such practices. The Obama Administration has subsequently ceased and prohibited the further implementation of such interrogation tactics.

[87] Walsh, "Intelligence Sharing and US Counterterrorism Policy," 8.

[88] Interpol Tripoli Report, Reference 6.27.8492.352, 15 April 1998, accessed at Federal Bureau of Investigation Electronic Vault, https://vault.fbi.gov/osama-bin-laden/osama-bin-laden-part-1-of-1.

September 2001 terror attacks, Qaddafi issued a forceful condemnation, calling the attacks "horrific and gruesome."[89] Shortly thereafter, in 2003, Qaddafi surprisingly renounced Libya's weapons of mass destruction program and embarked upon serious initiatives to resolve outstanding political disputes with the United Nations, the United States and the European Union. Accordingly, the US reciprocated by lifting its travel ban on Libya in February 2004, opening an avenue for increased commerce between the two countries. Just four months later, in June, formal diplomatic ties between the US and Libya were re-established, symbolized by the opening of a US "liaison office" in Tripoli. A true diplomatic milestone was reached in May 2006, when the US removed Libya from its list of state sponsors of terrorism. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's visit to Tripoli in September 2008 gave a public face to the new relationship.[90]

As relations between the two countries improved, Libyan authorities began a hierarchical intelligence relationship with the American government. A significant outcome of this newfound cooperation came in the form of counter-nuclear proliferation initiatives. For example, American operations with the Libyan intelligence services in the early 2000s led to the "shutting down of Pakistani scientist A.Q. Khan's nuclear proliferation network."[91] Fresh from such positive progress, President George W. Bush found an eager partner in Qaddafi to pursue al-Qaida in the global "war on terror." The Libyan strongman had identified al-Qaida as a serious threat due to links between members of Libya's Islamist opposition and foreign jihadist organizations. Qaddafi made clear his views on jihadists, publicly deriding al-Qaida supporters

[89] Christopher M. Blanchard, "Libya: Background and Relations," *Congressional Research Service,* 3 August 2009, 5.

[90] Libya Country Report, *The Economist Intelligence Unit*, December 2010.

[91] Derek S. Reveron, "Old Allies, New Friends: Intelligence-Sharing in the War on Terror," *Orbis,* 50, no. 3, (2006): 455.

as "heretics."[92] Eventually, the US/Libyan intelligence sharing partnership solidified to a level that Qaddafi described as "irrevocable."[93]

Recently released documents reveal details regarding CIA renditions of Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) members, an anti-Qaddafi group tied to al-Qaida. In one case, the CIA sought the capture and rendition to Libya of Abdul Hakim Belhaj, referred to in the documents by his pseudonym, Abu Abdullah al-Sadiq, who was an LIFG operative.[94] Belhaj was considered a lucrative target due to his purported connections with al-Qaida. During the late 1990s he had fled Libya for Afghanistan and associated with the Taliban, forming close relationships with Mullah Omar as well as local al-Qaida leaders.[95] Belhaj was transferred to Libya on 9 March 2004. Ironically, during the 2011 uprisings, Belhaj would emerge as a major figure in the anti-Qaddafi opposition, eventually becoming military commander in Tripoli. Also ironically, NATO's intervention would replace Qaddafi with rebel forces linked to radical Islamic terrorist groups—all in the name of democracy promotion.

The Obama Administration continued to fund Qaddafi's regime, following the Bush administration's formal recognition and economic assistance packages. In 2009, the United States provided foreign assistance to Libya totaling over $3.8 million.[96] As late as 2010, the Obama Administration requested foreign assistance funds for Libya to support: "$250,000 in Foreign Military Financing, $350,000 for International Military Education and Training, $500,000 for counter-terrorism and border security assistance, and as yet unspecified Nonproliferation Disarmament Fund and Global Threat Reduction

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[92] Blanchard, "Libya: Background and Relations," 5.
[93] Richard A. Oppel Jr., "Foreign Fighters in Iraq Are Tied to Allies of U.S.," *New York Times*, November 22, 2007.

[95] Profile: Libyan Rebel Commander Abdel Hakim Belhaj, *BBC News*. 5 September 2011.
[96] Blanchard, "Libya: Background and Relations," 1.

funding to continue nonproliferation activities involving Libyan scientists."[97]

Libya's crackdown on Islamic extremists followed a classic hierarchical intelligence sharing arrangement. Tripoli received international legitimacy, economic aid, and intelligence information. It was also emboldened to take action against dissident opposition groups. The United States gained a significant, Muslim ally in its fight against Islamic extremism, intelligence information about al-Qaida and its supporters, and considerable assistance in shutting down a nuclear proliferation network. The evidence suggests that American security interests in Libya were nothing less than critical to both regional stability and counter-terrorism initiatives.

The political instability of post-Qaddafi Libya presents a myriad of challenges to the intelligence sharing relationship with Washington. The high-profile murder of Ambassador Chris Stevens in 2012 exemplifies the immediate ramifications of losing such intelligence cooperation. From an exclusively security-based perspective, Qaddafi's willingness to "render" terrorists for the United States and share related intelligence significantly bolstered American regional interests. A regime sympathetic to Islamists in Tripoli could further destabilize regional dynamics, presenting ISIS, al-Qaida, and other terror groups with a valuable operating area. While supporting "democratic" opposition movements may seem consistent with American values, one must consider carefully the strategic environment vis-à-vis American security interests. As former Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency Director General Michael Hayden wisely notes, "the largest number of foreign fighters identified in Iraq came from Libya. Atiya Abdul Rahman, al-Qaida's

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[97] Blanchard, "Libya: Background and Relations," 5.

former second-in-command killed…in Pakistan, hails from Misrata, the very same town whose fighters liberated large sections of Tripoli."[98]

Libya and the Theory of Foreign Imposed Regime Change

President Obama admitted in an April 2016 interview that the biggest mistake of his presidency was "probably failing to plan for the day after, what I think was the right thing to do, in intervening in Libya."[99] In 2014, the President acknowledged, "We and our European partners underestimated the need to come in full force if you're going to do this [referring to the NATO intervention]. Then it's the day after Qaddafi is gone, when everyone is feeling good and everybody is holding up posters saying, 'Thank you, America.' At that moment, there has to be a much more aggressive effort to rebuild societies that didn't have any civic traditions."[100]

Many in the international community share the sentiments of Obama's very public confession. "In a sense it was lost from the beginning," stated Gérard Araud, France's ambassador to the United States, and an enthusiastic supporter of the NATO intervention.[101] "It was the same mistake you made in Iraq. You organize elections in a country with no experience of compromise or political parties. So you have an election, and you think that everything is solved. But eventually tribal realities come back to haunt that country."[102] Both President Obama and Ambassador Araud imply that the failure of NATO's intervention to herald a democratic, stable Libya is due to a simple lack

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[98] Michael V. Hayden, *"Libya's Real Challenge May Lie Ahead,"* CNN, 2 Sept 2011.
[99] Quoted in Dominic Tierney, "The Legacy of Obama's Worst Mistake," *The Atlantic,* April 15, 2016, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/04/obamas-worst-mistake-libya/478461/.
[100] Quoted in Thomas L. Friedman, "Obama on the World: President Obama Talks to Thomas L. Friedman About Iraq, Putin, and Israel," *The New York Times,* August 8, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/09/opinion/president-obama-thomas-l-friedman-iraq-and-world-affairs.html?_r=1.
[101] Quoted in Scott Shane and Jo Becker, "A New Libya, with Very Little Time Left," *The New York Times,* February 27, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/us/politics/libya-isis-hillary-clinton.html.
[102] Shane and Becker, "A New Libya, with Very Little Time Left."

of post-conflict planning, resource allocation, and misguided tribal allegiances. Such assertions, however, ignore a perhaps more prescient inquiry regarding the viability of foreign imposed regime change to produce democratic governance in target states.

Having established beforehand the magnitude of American security interests with Qaddafi's regime, this case study now inquires if toppling Qaddafi via military force *could* have led successfully to democratic governance in Libya. In order to explore this question, Alexander Downes and Jonathan Monten's Theory of Foreign Imposed Regime Change (FIRC) is employed as the evaluative criterion. Downes and Monten begin their analysis with an important query: "A key question is therefore whether democratization outcomes after intervention are the product of deliberate policy choices by the interveners or a function of how hospitable local conditions are to democratic change. Answering this question will enable policymakers to better understand and assess the risks and future likelihood of success when contemplating regime change."[103]

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[103] Alexander Downes and Jonathan Monten, "Forced to be Free: Why Foreign Imposed Regime Change Rarely Leads to Democratization," *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Spring 2013), pp. 90–131. Considerable international relations research offers differing perspectives on the influences of foreign imposed regime change vis-à-vis democratic outcomes. Downes and Monten's argument represents a unique theoretical proposition, as it "builds on the work of Peceny and Meernik, who identify the pro-democratic intent or actions of the intervener as the key conditioning factor. Downes and Monten look beyond US interventions, account for possible sources of selection bias, and show that focusing on the intervener is not enough: democratization success also hinges on the presence of favorable domestic conditions. See Peceny, *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets;* and Meernik, "United States Military Intervention and the Promotion of Democracy." Peic and Reiter draw a similar distinction between leadership and institutional regime changes, but examine the impact of FIRC only on civil conflict, not on democracy. See Peic and Reiter, "Foreign-Imposed Regime Change, State Power, and Civil War Onset." Elizabeth N. Saunders refers to interventions that seek to reshape institutions as "transformative," as opposed to "nontransformative" interventions that leave institutions unaffected. Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Intervention* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 5." Paraphrased from: Downes and Jonathan Monten, "Forced to be Free: Why Foreign Imposed Regime Change Rarely Leads to Democratization."

Western policymakers' fundamental assumptions regarding NATO's military campaign comprise perhaps the most perplexing element of the entire scenario. By the time UNSCR 1973 was passed in March 2011, the United States had already been involved in two major military conflicts predicated upon regime change—Iraq and Afghanistan. The well-known shortfalls in post-contingency planning for both countries should have prompted a more deliberate approach to Libya. As Dominic Tierney posits, President Obama "was elected on a 'no more Iraqs' platform, but he repeated the same mistake of winning the war and losing the peace."[104] In the Administration's defense, the National Transitional Council grossly overpromised what it could deliver and European allies, largely responsible for initially advocating military action, did not invest significantly in rebuilding post-Qaddafi Libya. But aside from these seemingly evident justifications lies an important counterfactual proposition. Had the United States and its allies installed a legitimate government in Tripoli, facilitated elections and guaranteed internal security, would the result have been any different?

Downes and Monten's theory predicts that foreign imposed regime change in Libya, even under the most ideal circumstances, would not have led to democratization in that country. While a full examination of Downes and Monten's quantitative methodology exceeds the scope of this work, a brief overview of their data samplings is prudent. In summary, Downes and Monten employ the leading dataset of democracy developed by international relations scholars, the Polity Index.[105] The Polity Index determines the level of democracy in a political system that accounts for recruitment of political leaders, institutionalized constraints on executive

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[104] Dominic Tierney, "The Legacy of Obama's Worst Mistake," *The Atlantic,* April 15, 2016, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/04/obamas-worst-mistake-libya/478461/.

[105] Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jaggers, *Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2010,* http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm.

power, and the degree of political competition in the target state.[106] Limiting the range of their analysis to twentieth-century cases, Downes and Monten conclude that 70 instances of foreign imposed regime change occurred during the associated time period.[107] Control variables are introduced to capture the effects of factors associated with democratic governance: "1) Level of economic development; 2) State age; 3) Previous experience with democracy; 4) Previous colonial association; 5) Ethnic heterogeneity; 6) History of interstate or civil war."[108]

Contrasting their data sets in the year before foreign intervention with their average Policy index scores ten years after intervention, Monten and Downes observed that target states only experience democratic gains (over 5 points on the Polity index) if the intervener takes actions to promote democracy.[109] Such actions include sponsoring elections, building civil society-based institutions, and fostering rules-based political culture. Additionally, Downes and Monten determine that only the most ethnically homogenous states received major boosts in their probability of democratic transition.[110] Specifically, "states at or below 0.15 on the ethnolinguistic fractionalization index are about 10 percent more likely to democratize after an institutional foreign imposed regime change. This determines that democratization outcomes are better when target state populations are highly homogenous and democratic interveners make efforts to reform institutions."[111]

Downes and Monten offer a particularly enlightening conclusion regarding the relationship between a target state's domestic

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[106] Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jaggers, *Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2010,* http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm.
[107] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 111. For a more comprehensive overview of how the authors determine a legitimate, foreign imposed regime change, see the full article "Forced to be Free."
[108] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 115.
[109] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 116.
[110] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 126.
[111] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 126

preconditions and prospects for democratization. In the authors' research, when "previously democratic states experienced a FIRC wherein only the leader was removed, the probability of a [democratic] transition increased to 11 percent—but it increased to 20 percent after a FIRC in which the full range of domestic institutions underwent a fundamental transition."[112] These results suggest the combination of intervener actions to promote institutional change and favorable preconditions for democracy, e.g., previous history of democratic governance, ethnic homogeneity, economic stability, increase target state levels of democracy.[113] More important—especially as a criterion for policymakers—is the conclusion that FIRC cannot engender democratic change absent amenable domestic conditions.[114] At the same time, promising preconditions do not translate automatically into democratic governance. Rather, this demands a significant investment of resources by the intervener to transform institutions. The below synopsis captures the theory's overall conclusions in the authors' own words:

> Successful democratization following FIRC depends on both the strategy adopted by the intervener and whether domestic conditions in the target state are favorable to democracy. When intervening democracies target individual leaders for removal but leave the underlying political institutions of a regime intact, democratization is unlikely to occur, even if conditions favorable to democracy are present. Interventions that implement concrete, pro-democratic institutional reforms, such as sponsoring elections, can succeed when conditions in the target state are favorable to democracy. When domestic preconditions for democracy are lacking, however, the democratizing efforts of the intervener are largely for naught: states that are economically underdeveloped, ethnically heterogeneous, or lack prior experience with representative government face serious obstacles to democratization, and even outsides with good

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[112] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 127.
[113] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 128.
[114] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 128.

intentions are typically unable to surmount these
barriers no matter how hard they try.[115]

Why Did Foreign Imposed Regime Change Fail in Libya?

Armed with the data from Downes and Monten's analysis,
policymakers might have concluded that removing Qaddafi would not
bring democratization. First, Western powers did not invest sufficiently
in post-conflict reconstruction efforts. NATO's misplaced faith in the
ability of the National Transitional Council to govern Libya represents
one contributing factor. United Nations Security Council Resolution
2009, issued on 16 September 2011, established United Nations Support
Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) for a period of 90 days.[116] While UNSMIL's
mission focused on restoring security and the rule of law, a lack of
sufficient commitment by European powers as well as the United States
failed to address mounting internal unrest. Obama's recognition of the
failed post-contingency planning further underscores NATO's
shortcomings in strategic conceptualization. Libya, per the theory of
foreign imposed regime change, would have required huge efforts on the
part of the interveners to fundamentally transform domestic institutions.

Furthermore, Libya's heterogeneous societal structure (much like
Iraq and Afghanistan) presented a myriad of challenges to successful
democratization. Comprised of over 140 tribes, Libyan society was
heavily fragmented between three historical regions of Tripolitania,
Cyrenaica, and Fezzan.[117] Downes and Monten determine that

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[115] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 94.

[116] United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2009, S/RES/2009 (2011), adopted by
the Security Council at its 6620th meeting, September 16, 2011,
http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_09/20110927_110916-UNSCR-
2009.pdf.

[117] Christine N. Myers, "Tribalism and Democratic Transition in Libya: Lessons from
Iraq," *Global Tides*: Vol. 7, Article 5,
http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/globaltides/vol7/iss1/5.

heterogeneous states exhibit negative trends of democratic transition. "Foreign-imposed regime change in heterogeneous states," per FIRC theory, "touches off struggles for power among contending groups or results in status reversals for groups displaced from power, which may fight to regain their previous position. This is what happened in Iraq and Afghanistan—both highly heterogeneous countries—and the resulting insurgencies have helped slow democratic transition in those countries to a crawl."[118]

The complete absence of democratic tradition in Libya further contributed to deeply unfavorable domestic conditions vis-à-vis democratic governance. Qaddafi had ruled Libya since 1969, ruthlessly repressing any perceived challenges to his authoritarian regime. In 2011, just prior to Libya's internal uprisings, Freedom House assigned Qaddafi's Libya the worst possible score of 7 out of 7 on its freedom-rating matrix.[119] According to the report, "political parties are illegal, and the government strictly monitors political activity. Organizing or joining anything akin to a political party is punishable by long prison terms and even the death penalty."[120] Thus, according to Downes and Monten's theory, even if Western powers had invested significantly in reforming Libya's domestic institutions, internal political conditions made the prospect of democratization highly improbable.

Western notions of a military campaign "without a significant ground commitment"—embodied in an overreliance in airpower's capabilities—also contributed to flawed planning assumptions. NATO was to some extent effective in protecting civilians, but its failure to explore seriously any peace negotiations may have actually extended the

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[118] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 106.
[119] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World Report – 2011," https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/libya.
[120] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World Report – 2011," https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/libya.

violence by several months. The lack of a ground commitment by Western forces contributed to the disconnected approach of simply providing an "air force for rent" to the rebel opposition. As previously noted, NATO partnered with groups connected to terror organizations and failed to vet appropriately key opposition partners. While NATO's reliance on airpower may have saved resources and avoided a ground invasion, the intervention highlights the futility of regime change via aerial decapitation. As Downes and Monten conclude, "decapitating a regime by removing its leader may appear to be a quick and low-cost means to initiate democratic change, but decapitation alone is unlikely to succeed. Foreign-imposed change that aims to reform the institutions of a regime, however, can be effective *if* favorable internal preconditions are present. *These conditions, unfortunately, are relatively rare in countries where the costs of intervention are low* [emphasis added]."[121]

Summary

The Libya intervention is now widely acknowledged to have been a strategic failure. America's historical preference for democracy promotion exerted significant influence on US policymakers' decision calculus. In their desire to expand the democratic zone of peace, interventionists paradoxically destabilized an entire geographic region. Even as American troops still fought in both Iraq and Afghanistan, US political leaders discarded warnings regarding the trustworthiness of the rebels, their ability to form a stable government, and the potential of becoming trapped in a "nation-building" scenario. Despite these inconvenient realities, the powerful image of oppressed, democracy-seeking insurgents resisting a tyrannical despot captivated American interventionists. In light of its results, the experience of Libya should serve as a cautionary note to policymakers regarding the central importance of reasoned, strategic messaging in humanitarian

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[121] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 94.

interventions. Considerable strategic dissonance distracted from NATO's civilian-protection mission as Western leaders publicly called for regime change in the midst of active military operations.

In cost-benefit terms, the above evidence suggests Washington lost considerably more than it achieved through its Libyan adventure. Radical Islamic groups now threaten the very existence of the Libyan state, depriving the United States of the critical intelligence-sharing partnership it once enjoyed. The humanitarian crisis within Libya has generated a mass exodus of immigrants to Europe, challenging the infrastructure of US allies already mired in a financial crisis. Where Washington could once count on Qaddafi's steady hand to mitigate the Islamist threat, the US has been obliged to invest over $170 million in economic assistance since 2011.[122] The unrestricted flow of weapons from Qaddafi's forces to the international black market as well as regional terror organizations remain major concerns. Additionally, the UN Special Representative in Libya has expressed repeated concerns regarding the maintenance of control over former military sites containing chemical and nuclear material.[123]

In military terms, the US/NATO strategy in the Libya intervention personifies what Robert Pape defines as "political decapitation" from the air. Pape outlines this approach as "using airpower to create the circumstances in which local groups overthrow the government, either by popular revolt or coup, replacing it with one more amenable to concessions."[124] Washington's reliance on political decapitation via airpower in Libya, and as now proposed in Syria, is of particular importance, as the means of generating military effects can often fail to satisfy American political objectives. According to Pape, "the main

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[122] US Embassy Tripoli, "US Partnerships in Libya," http://libya.usembassy.gov/partnerships.html.
[123] Center for Strategic and International Studies, "International Assistance to the New Libya," http://csis.org/publication/international-assistance-new-libya.
[124] Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 82.

attraction of targeting political leadership with [airpower] is that it offers the possibility of successful coercion with minimal commitment of resources and risk of life."[125] In the Libyan campaign, NATO airstrikes did not compel Qaddafi to make *any* concessions. On the contrary, Qaddafi and his followers displayed fierce resolve, holding on to power for months in spite of the air campaign. The failure of NATO's air campaign to coerce the Libyan regime culminated in Qaddafi's October 2011 execution. As Pape asserts, "a surrender long before complete military defeat should be regarded as an outstanding success…if a coercive attempt is made but the war ends only when one side is decisively defeated, the coercion has failed."[126] Where former Defense Secretary Gates warned against sending a "large land army to the Middle East," American politicians showed no hesitation in unleashing airpower in Libya. The American historical preference for democracy promotion coupled with the trend of aerial decapitation presents a dangerous combination for US decision makers. The deceptive lure of "minimal military commitment" engenders a false sense of risk mitigation and masks potentially deleterious outcomes.

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[125] Pape, *Bombing to Win,* 80.
[126] Pape, *Bombing to Win,* 15.

Chapter 5

The Influence of Democracy Promotion on US Handling of the Syrian
Civil War (2011-Present)

What kind of a world will we live in if the United States of America
sees a dictator brazenly violate international law with poison gas and
we choose to look the other way?
– *President Barack H. Obama,*
September 2013,
in response to a chemical-weapons
attack by the Syrian regime

This case study builds upon the conclusions established in the
Libya analysis to explore the influence of democracy promotion on
Washington's handling of the Syrian Civil War. Evaluating an on-going
political/military impasse such as Syria is a risky proposition. In order
to mitigate being overtaken by events, this analysis focuses on two broad
issues that transcend day-to-day developments: 1) US security interests
in Syria as an "ally of convenience" and 2) Weighing regional stability
versus democracy promotion in America's approach to the conflict.
Addressing calls for US military intervention, the study applies the
theory of foreign imposed regime change to assess the prospects of
Syria's democratization in the event of President Bashar al-Assad's
removal by military force.

Overview

In July 2000, a young, Western-educated ophthalmologist
ascended to the Syrian presidency in Damascus. After forty years of his
father's authoritarian rule, domestic and international voices were quick
to hail President Bashar al-Assad a "reformer" with a firm commitment to
modernizing Syria.[1] While al-Assad made considerable changes in terms

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[1] Raymond Hinnebusch, "Syria: From 'Authoritarian Upgrading' to Revolution?"
International Affairs, 88: I (2012), 95-113.

of reorganizing the Syrian regime's social base, he did not enact the sweeping political reforms many had hoped for.[2] By 2011, in the midst of the Arab Spring uprisings, Freedom House assigned Syria a score of 6.5 out of 7 on its international freedom rating for political rights and civil liberties.[3] The passage of time only made more apparent al-Assad's intentions to place regime survivability above the implementation of reforms. Based on the history of his family's rule in Damascus, however, al-Assad probably calculated that he had few alternatives to that of maintaining the status quo.

Much like the fractious societies of Iraq and Libya, Syria's complicated internal dynamics present a myriad of challenges to effective governance. In the words of Ted Galen Carpenter, Syria is akin to a "fragile ethnoreligious tapestry" that has been slowly unraveling since Hafez al-Assad's consolidation of power in 1970.[4] In Syria, the ruling elites come from minority groups that have amassed power through shifting alliances, bribery, and violence. This "coalition of minorities" consists of Christians, 10-12 percent of the population; Alawites, a Shiite-aligned group, also between 10-12 percent); and Druze 6 percent.[5] The al-Assad dynasty, which belongs to the Alawite minority, has guaranteed the primacy of its ethnoreligious allies by assigning them to positions of power throughout key government institutions. Sunni Arabs, who comprise nearly 60 percent of Syria's populace, have long been marginalized by the regime, enduring often-brutal tactics of repression. The 1982 massacre at Hama is perhaps the most glaring illustration of such brutality—then President Hafez al-Assad ordered the

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[2] Hinnebusch, "Syria: From 'Authoritarian Upgrading' to Revolution?"
[3] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World Survey," Syria, 2011, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/syria.
[4] Ted Galen Carpenter, "Tangled Web: The Syrian Civil War and Its Implications," *Mediterranean Quarterly,* 24: 1, 2013.
[5] Ted Galen Carpenter, "Tangled Web: The Syrian Civil War and Its Implications."

slaughter of somewhere between 10 and 30,000 people to quell an uprising by the Sunni-led Muslim Brotherhood.[6]

The Uprisings Begin

The Syrian regime did not initially view the Arab Spring movement as a threat to its survival nor address seriously opposition grievances. Al-Assad's attempts at reforms in the mid-2000s, combined with his focus on foreign policy and economic development, created a false sense of insulation within regime circles. The International Crisis Group attributes this ambivalence to a generational shift within the ruling elite, which, "having inherited power rather than fought for it, grown up in Damascus, mingled with and mimicked the ways of the urban upper class', had lost touch with its social roots."[7] As protests escalated throughout the country, regime forces killed demonstrators in the southern city of Deraa in March 2011, prompting both domestic and international condemnation.[8] Throughout 2011, armed confrontations intensified rapidly, with opposition groups employing suicide bombers against government forces and regime troops shelling major cities such as Homs.[9] As a full-blown civil war began, the international community began to view the increasing violence as a threat to regional stability.

It is important—particularly at this juncture—to examine Washington's initial response to the Syrian conflict. In August 2011, as the Libyan opposition was poised to capture Tripoli, President Obama issued the following declaration regarding the situation in Syria: "The future of Syria must be determined by its people, but President Bashar al-Assad is standing in their way," stated Obama. "For the sake of the

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[6] Basma Atassi, "Breaking the Silence Over Hama Atrocities," *Al Jazeera,* Februray 2, 2012, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/02/20122232155715210.html.
[7] Hinnebusch, "Syria: From 'Authoritarian Upgrading' to Revolution?"
[8] British Broadcasting Corporation, "Syria Profile," http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703995.
[9] British Broadcasting Corporation, "Syria Profile," http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14703995.

Syrian people, the time has come for President Assad to step aside."[10] Indeed, the administration's approach to the Syrian crisis bears an uncanny resemblance to its actions vis-à-vis Libya. Even without a clear picture of the opposition's ideological predilections, the United States was quick to demand Assad's ouster.

David Enders, a journalist for McClatchy newspapers, spent over a month with Syrian rebel forces—now known as the Free Syrian Army—in the spring of 2012.[11] Enders described succinctly the nature of the opposition forces' ethnoreligious composition: "the armed rebels are Sunni to a man."[12] Irrespective of its efforts to portray a "pan-Syrian" uprising against the al-Assad regime, Enders noted that the Free Syrian Army, as well as its political equivalent, the Syrian National Council, was an "extension of the Muslim Brotherhood, a well-known Islamist organization."[13] Enders' observations were echoed by many voices within the foreign policy and national security establishment. James Jay Carafano, a scholar at the conservative, Washington-based Heritage Foundation, posited, "many of the same toxic dynamics that drove the frenzy of violence (along ethno-sectarian lines) in Iraq in 2006 are present in spades in Syria."[14]

Calls for Intervention

The conflict in Syria has emerged as more brutal, destructive, and destabilizing than originally anticipated. The opposition's initial protests, together with a Sunni resurgence in Iraq, have given rise to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terror organization, which has occupied

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[10] Scott Wilson and Joby Warrick, "Assad Must Go, Obama Says," *The Washington Post,* August 28, 2011.

[11] Quoted in Ted Galen Carpenter, "Tangled Web: The Syrian Civil War and Its Implications."

[12] Quoted in Ted Galen Carpenter, "Tangled Web: The Syrian Civil War and Its Implications."

[13] David Enders, "Weeks Spent with Syrian Rebels Reveal a Force of Sunni Muslim Civilians," McClatchy Newspapers, 25 June 2012.

[14] James Jay Carafano, "Serious about Syria," *Washington Examiner,* 1 July 2012, Washington examiner.com/serious-about-syria/article/2501105#.UE9mVK6eKRI.

large swaths of an "eastern Caliphate" in Syria. Calls for a more "hands-on" US policy vis-à-vis Syria highlight a continuation of the tension between realism and liberalism in American foreign policy. Following Obama's August 2011 call for al-Assad's removal, many hawkish US lawmakers sought to actively support the Syrian opposition. Joseph Lieberman, an Independent senator from Connecticut, declared that American and Allied airpower could "break the will" of al-Assad's forces and "put an end to this terrible waster of life."[15] In a 4 March 2012 article in the *New Republic,* Senator John McCain, an Arizona Republican and former 2008 Republican Nominee for President, echoed Lieberman in calling for airstrikes "to establish and defend safe havens in Syria, especially in the north, in which opposition forces can organize and plan their political and military activities against al-Assad."[16] In McCain's view, such safe havens "could also help the Free Syrian Army and other armed groups in Syria to train and organize themselves into more cohesive and effective military forces, likely with the assistance of foreign partners."[17] The credibility, however, of the very opposition forces McCain sought to support was murky at best.

When al-Assad's forces employed chemical weapons against opposition elements in 2013, President Obama declared that a "red line" had been crossed by the Syrian regime and threatened US military action.[18] In the face of domestic war-weariness, the President implemented a diplomatic solution to eliminate Syria's chemical weapon

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[15] Quoted in Carlo Munoz, "McCain, Lieberman Slam White House's Syria Strategy on Senate Floor," *Hill,* 7 June 2012, thehill.com/blogs/defcon-hill/policy-and-strategy/231523-mccain -lieberman-slam-white-houses-syria-strategy-on-senate-floor-.
[16] John McCain, "It's Time to Use American Airpower in Syria," *The New Republic,* March 4, 2012, https://newrepublic.com/article/101405/mccain-speech-america-airpower-syria.
[17] McCain, "It's Time to Use American Airpower in Syria."
[18] Ernesto Londoño, "Obama Says US Will Take Military Action Against Syria, Pending Congress's Approval," *The Washington Post,* August 31, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/obama-set-to-speak-on-syria-in-rose-garden/2013/08/31/65aea210-125b-11e3-85b6-d27422650fd5_story.html.

stockpiles via cooperation with the Russian government.[19] With the hindsight of the Libyan experience, calls for military intervention by both the administration and lawmakers raise an important question: "are US interests best served by removing al-Assad from power?" In order to explore this possibility further, one must assess existing American security interests in Syria as well as the prospects for post-Assad governance. This is because US support to the anti-Assad opposition presupposes a desire to include Syria within the "zone of democratic peace."

Until the uprisings in 2011, the United States never called openly for such drastic measures as regime change in Damascus. The Bush administration called the al-Assad regime a "pariah," but did not advocate military action.[20] Both the international community and the United States attempted a rapprochement with Syria as late as 2010. The Obama Administration removed its travel warning to Syria for US citizens, approved Boeing's cooperation with Syria's national airline for aircraft upgrades, and submitted an ambassadorial nominee to Damascus.[21] European business executives also explored increased commercial cooperation with the al-Assad regime, seeking to access Syria's growing economy.[22]

At the time, Syrian opposition groups critiqued the West's hypocrisy in embracing the al-Assad regime, claiming that Americans and Europeans ignored human rights violations to pursue regional

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[19] The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Statement by the President on US-Russian Agreement on Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons," September 14, 2013, https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/09/14/statement-president-us-russian-agreement-framework-elimination-syrian-ch.

[20] "Syria and the New Axis of Evil," Editorial, *The Washington Times,* September 29, 2003.

[21] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World Index," 2011, Syria Country Report, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/syria

[22] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World Index," 2011, Syria Country Report, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/syria

interests.[23] The West's "opening" to Syria, however, ended abruptly in the same year as President Obama re-imposed sanctions on Damascus in response to allegations Syria supplied Hezbollah with illicit arms.[24] While the US-Syria relationship remains exceptionally complicated, Mearsheimer perhaps best frames the balance between American interests versus principles in that country: "For all the talk about the need to topple Bashar al-Assad because he is a ruthless tyrant, Washington was able to live with him—and his equally ruthless father— for more than forty years."[25]

Intelligence Sharing with Syria

Damascus may appear as an unlikely candidate to share intelligence information with the United States due to its antagonistic relationship with Washington. From a US perspective, Syria's clientelistic ties with the Iranian regime have made Damascus a threat to the regional stability of the Middle East. However, the Syrian government, as in the now public examples of Pakistan, Yemen, Libya, and others, controls human intelligence sources well beyond the reach of US intelligence agencies. Furthermore, Syria likely possesses a network of highly valuable contacts related to radical Islamic terror groups, in particular the Islamic State.[26] For obvious reasons, however, it is exceptionally difficult to obtain documentation regarding the extent of US/Syrian intelligence cooperation in unclassified channels.

One example of US/Syrian intelligence sharing during the George W. Bush Administration demonstrates that beyond his anti-Western rhetoric, al-Assad can indeed be a pragmatist. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Syria shared valued sources of intelligence on al-

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[23] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World Index," 2011, Syria Country Report, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/syria
[24] Freedom House, "Freedom in the World Index," 2011, Syria Country Report, https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/syria
[25] John J. Mearsheimer, "America Unhinged," *The National Interest,* Number 129, Jan/Feb 2014.
[26] Reveron, "Old Allies, New Friends: Intelligence-Sharing in the War on Terror."

Qaida with American intelligence services. Specifically, Syrian intelligence services provided their American counterparts with "hundreds of files on al-Qaida cells throughout the Middle East and in Muslim communities in Europe."[27] Additionally, the Syrian government aided United States Central Command in ensuring the protection of American forces in the Middle East. In 2002, Syria shared critical intelligence that helped thwart attacks on the US Fifth Fleet Headquarters in Bahrain and on an American target in Ottawa, Canada."[28] The threat posed by the Islamic State to both US and European security interests certainly raises questions about future intelligence cooperation with the al-Assad regime. While unclassified sources are lacking, Washington may yet find itself confronted with a choice between stable autocrat in Damascus or the prospect of ISIS's further entrenchment and expansion.

Syria and the Theory of Foreign Imposed Regime Change

Since its 2013 declaration, the Obama Administration has not signaled to date a willingness to conduct a Libya-style aerial decapitation campaign against the al-Assad regime. Nonetheless, notions of an American intervention to bolster Syria's "democratic" opposition still enjoy support in American national security circles. For example, senior Senators McCain and Lindsey Graham (Republican-South Carolina), announced a plan in November 2015 to augment American air efforts against ISIS with a combined force of 20,000 troops in both Syria and Iraq.[29] While these troops would be employed ostensibly against the Islamic State, previous statements by McCain and Graham underscore their support for regime change in Syria.

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[27] Reveron, "Old Allies, New Friends: Intelligence-Sharing in the War on Terror."
[28] Reveron, "Old Allies, New Friends: Intelligence-Sharing in the War on Terror."
[29] "John McCain and Lindsey Graham Call for 20,000 Troops in Syria and Iraq," *The Guardian*, November 29, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/29/john-mccain-lindsey-graham-20000-troops-syria-iraq.

A 2013 RAND Corporation Study, "Airpower Options for Syria," assessed the strategic objectives of a potential Libya-style air campaign. "An aerial intervention against the Syrian Army," claims the report, "could do more to ensure that the regime fell than to determine its replacement."[30] Additionally, the report suggests an air campaign could potentially, "protect civilians, limit or contain the conflict, and perhaps change the course of the war."[31] When questioned if the aerial intervention in Libya could be used as a successful model for Syria, Jodice replied, "No—I don't consider Libya a model for anything except for Libya. We did what worked for us in that scenario, but I don't believe Libya is necessarily a model for emulation in a different theater of operations."[32]

Considering the possibility of a Western military campaign in Syria, what would the theory of foreign imposed regime change predict regarding the probability of post-Assad democratization? First, due to the complete absence of democratic tradition in Syria, Western interveners would have to invest significant resources in transforming Syrian political institutions. It is not unrealistic to assess the potential costs of doing so in terms of hundreds of millions of dollars as well as a prolonged, multi-year assistance authority. Second, according to Downes and Monten's theory, Syrian society's heterogeneous structure (much like Libya) presents significant obstacles to democratic transition. The fractious nature of ethnoreligious strife would most likely pit rival groups against one another, setting off a highly probable period of significant violence. Third, given the example of Libya, Bashar al-Assad is unlikely to be deterred by aerial attacks alone. An aerial decapitation campaign may actually create the opposite effect of strengthening the

[30] Karl P. Mueller, Jeffrey Martini, and Thomas Hamilton, "Airpower Options for Syria: Assessing Objectives and Missions for Aerial Intervention," (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013).
[31] Mueller, Martini, and Thomas Hamilton, "Airpower Options for Syria."
[32] Lieutenant General (ret) Ralph J. Jodice II, Interview with the author, April 5th 2016.

regime's will to remain in power.[33] The Libya analogy certainly supports such a scenario. More important, as Downes and Monten posit, even under the best circumstances, "outsiders with good intentions are typically unable to surmount these barriers (i.e. institution building, democratic deficit, heterogeneous society, economic weakness] no matter how hard they try."[34] Although the United States has few "good" options in the Syrian Civil War, Washington must weigh carefully the influence its future policies may have on the trajectory of the conflict.

Summary

The Syrian Civil War has ballooned from an internal opposition protest into a conflict involving the United States, Europe, Russia, and Middle-Eastern powers. America's natural predisposition to support democratic movements precipitated Obama's premature demand for Bashar al-Assad's ouster. In counterfactual terms, America would probably have had additional flexibility with which to craft its policies without such an aggressive declaration. To be clear, al-Assad is neither a champion of democratic reform nor a liberal internationalist concerned with human rights and self-determination. Assad is, however, a pole of stability in a fractious, chaotic region. His demonstrated willingness to exchange intelligence with the United States suggests he is a more pragmatic actor than many surmise. More important, the above evidence indicates that America has a greater interest in seeing the Islamic State defeated, as well as al-Qaida and forces associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, than in pursuing regime change in Damascus.

Downes and Monten's theory of foreign imposed regime change also provides an important tool with which to determine alternate future scenarios associated with Western military intervention. Due to Syria's notably unfavorable domestic conditions, the country is an unlikely candidate for democratic transition in a post-Assad construct. While

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[33] Pape, *Bombing to Win,* 80.
[34] Downes and Monten, "Forced to be Free," 94.

supporting openly autocratic regimes is not politically popular in a liberal democracy, regional stability is far more important to American security interests. As Raymond Hinnebusch notes, "insofar as the Syrian opposition was encouraged by the regional incarnations of western-promoted neoliberalism, the tilt of the West towards the opposition seems problematic. Any new government in Damascus will be confronted with the same policy dilemmas and limited options that faced Assad's, and will struggle to find better or even different answers to Syria's intractable problems.[35]

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[35] Raymond Hinnebusch, "Syria: From 'Authoritarian Upgrading' to Revolution?" *International Affairs,* 88: I (2012), 95-113.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

> What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans, and the
> homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the
> name of totalitarianism or in the holy name of liberty or
> democracy?
> – *Mahatma Gandhi, in Non-Violence in Peace and War, 1942*

America's experience indicates that democracy promotion is linked to its security interests. Woodrow Wilson's philosophical conviction that liberal, democratic governance translates into an optimal arrangement of the broader international order still warrants merit as a consideration of American foreign policy. Even the most committed political realists understand that strong, liberal democracies exhibit superior macroeconomic trends and are more committed to safeguarding the rights and privileges of individual citizens. Moreover, the post-World War II international order, anchored by liberal, supranational institutions, has advantageously served American interests to the present day.

Nevertheless, the unqualified promotion of democracy and global democratic movements—in particular through the exercise of military force—has at times worked counter to American political and security interests. The chaotic aftermaths of the Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya campaigns underscore such deleterious outcomes. In a unipolar international construct, the character of the hegemon and its subsequent actions portend unprecedented implications on a global scale. Therefore, the United States must balance carefully its rhetoric on democracy promotion with its actions, especially in terms of conducting offensive military actions.

The enduring debate surrounding realism versus idealism in American foreign policy will continue to frame future considerations about the exercise of Washington's military power. To this end, realists

should appreciate that the expansion of liberal democracy abroad benefits American security interests via strengthening the liberal order. In parallel, liberal internationalists must recognize that democratic values cannot be applied universally and without qualification. Promoting democracy "at the point of bayonets" has yielded historically mixed results.

In unstable regions such as the Middle East, democracy promotion runs counter to American interests of regional stability. Consider this anecdote from Fareed Zakaria depicting a fictional meeting between former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and a senior US diplomat:

> Passing layers of security guards, the American diplomat arrives at a formal drawing room where he is received with great courtesy by the Egyptian president. The two talk amiably about US-Egyptian relations, regional affairs, and the state of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. Then the American gently raises the issue of human rights and suggests that Egypt's government might ease up on political dissent, allow more press freedoms, and stop jailing intellectuals. Mubarak tenses up and snaps, "If I were to do what you ask, Islamic fundamentalists will take over Egypt. Is that what you want?"[1]

Mubarak's subsequent demise notwithstanding, the above scenario could easily accommodate Saddam Hussein, Bashar al-Assad, Muammar Qaddafi, and a host of other autocratic rulers. While collaborating with autocratic regimes seems antithetical to America's moral predilections, such an approach is often a political necessity. The United States maintained beneficial alliances of convenience with Qaddafi's Libya and Assad's Syria, acquiring critical intelligence sharing relationships that facilitated Washington's anti-terror strategy. The destabilization of both the Libyan and Syrian regimes has threatened regional security and

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[1] Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*, (New York: Norton Publishers, 2003), 119.

deprived the United States of important interlocutors in the struggle against Islamic extremism.

The analyses of Libya and Syria deliver an important cautionary note to American decision makers—executing a foreign regime change via military force depends heavily upon the strategy applied by the intervener and the favorability of domestic conditions within the target state. American support of democratic movements in Libya and Syria has upset the regional balance-of-power and yielded unfavorable conditions for American security interests. These examples should emphasize to American decision makers the criticality of judicious discernment vis-à-vis cooperation with autocratic regimes in balancing regional stability with democratic governance.

From a military perspective, the United States' recent practice of supporting indigenous, insurgent forces with airpower to affect regime change represents a potentially flawed strategy. While politicians may be tempted to employ airpower to avoid a protracted ground commitment, empirical evidence demonstrates the futility of this approach. Absent firm commitment from this country or its allies to invest heavily in post-war governance, democratization via aerial decapitation is exceptionally unlikely to achieve its intended objectives, exemplified by the Libyan campaign. Volatile states such as Libya and Syria, with fragmented, heterogeneous societies, are more likely to descend into ethnoreligious civil war as a result of a foreign imposed regime change.[2] As Clausewitz presciently observed over two centuries ago, "the statesman and commander must establish . . . the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature."[3] Today's statesmen and generals must

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[2] Alexander Downes and Jonathan Monten, "Forced to be Free: Why Foreign Imposed Regime Change Rarely Leads to Democratization," *International Security*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Spring 2013), pp. 90–131.
[3] Carl von Clausewitz, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, *On War,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976/1984), 88.

appreciate beforehand the ineffectuality of foreign imposed regime change within countries that lack favorable conditions for democratization.

Additionally, America's history of global expansionism in the name of its self-professed, democratizing mission contributes to a widening metaperception gap between America and the world. If the United States intends to promote democracy abroad, Washington would be well advised to avoid doing so via military means. In cases where legitimate, vetted, indigenous movements seek a democratic transition, Washington should rely on its diplomatic, informational, and economic instruments of national power in promoting democracy. Such a gradualist approach will not likely yield the immediate power shifts associated with military force. But this method would reduce significantly risks to American political and security interests.

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